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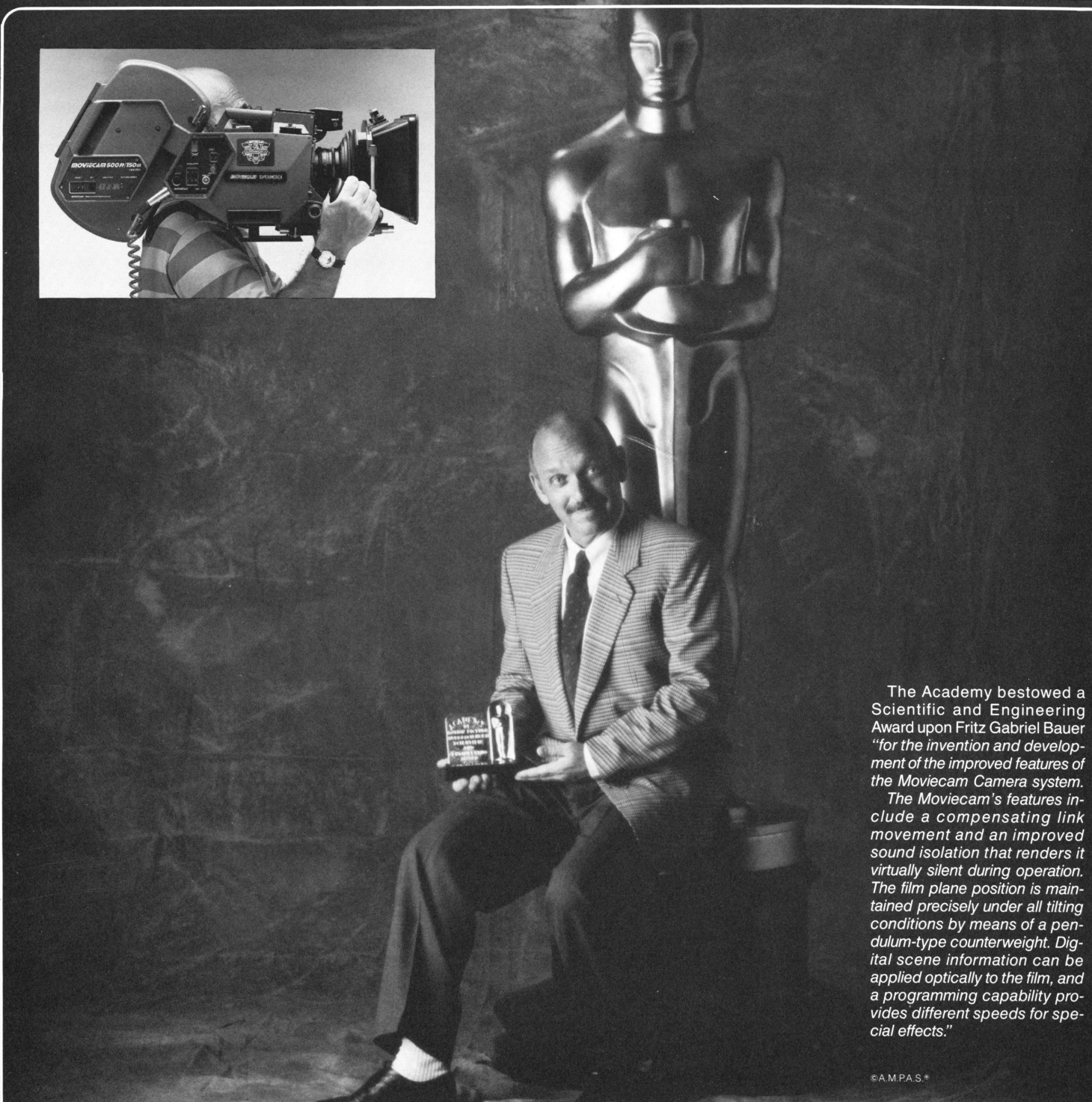
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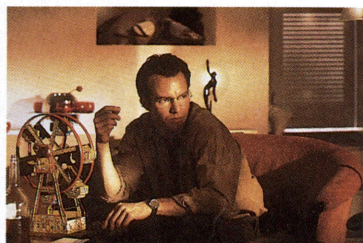
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On Our Cover:
Shari Headley and
Eddie Murphy in
scene from *Coming
to America*. (Photo
by Bruce McBroom)

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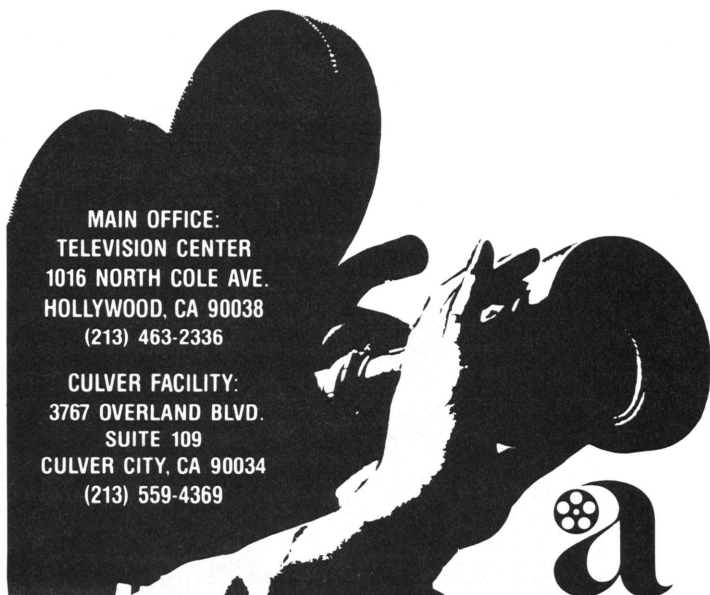
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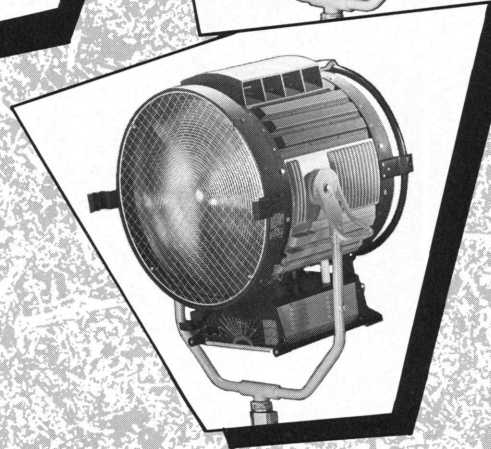
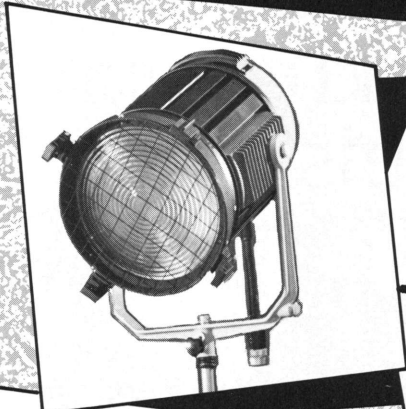
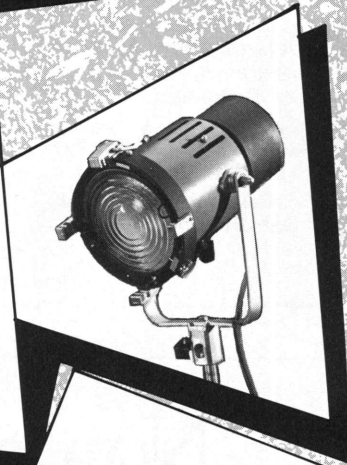
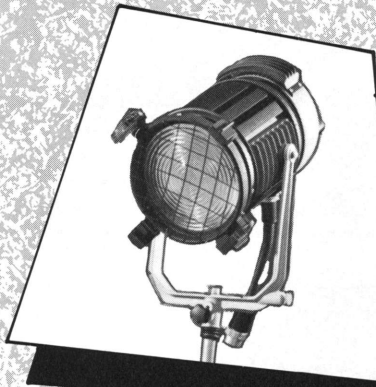
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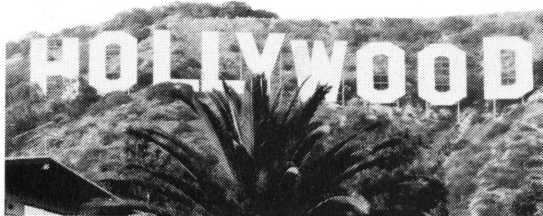
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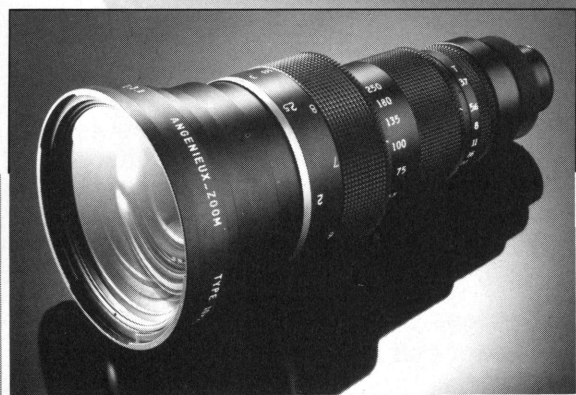
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No lens stands alone, so the new 6 x 17HP has been specifically designed to provide ideal color and contrast compatibility with the Angenieux's 25-250HP and today's popular primes.

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Specifications

Focal length	17-102 mm
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Compact two ways

The “car window” setup can be rigged two ways: Pod and camera can be 14½ inches high, 21½ inches wide. Or they can be 20½ inches high, 13 inches wide.

Riser versatility: higher, lower, faster

With the risers, you can also scrape the ceiling or the floor without going to a longer crane arm. Less mass in the arm means a quicker setup, a smaller dolly, happier grips, crisper moves.

Simpler to set up and to operate

This is a sophisticated remote head, but it's relatively straight-

forward to set up and relatively simple to work with. You *don't* need to hire a special “operator.” Money saved.

Weighs about 15% less

In compact form, the Power Pod is about 15% lighter than the competition. That also means less lead on the *back* of the boom. When your key grip needs to make a fast stop, every little bit helps.

Save money — rent only what you need

Another way to save money: at Clairmont, you don't have to rent a whole package — just the parts you need. If you don't need a zoom control, if you don't want the Joystick, if you already have a video monitor, you don't have to pay for them.

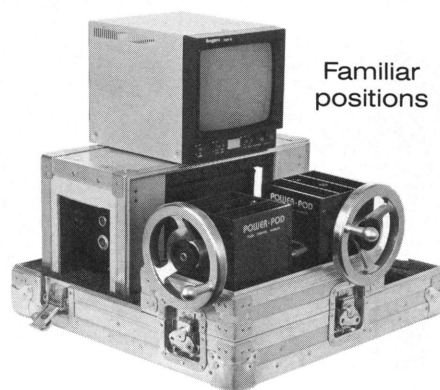
We can help you pick what's needed

We'll be happy to advise you on what to take, if you like. Maybe you *do* want a zoom control, or a follow-focus. But if you already have those on the camera, all you may need is a couple of extension cables.

They need no special ‘operator.’ You rent only the bits you need. Adjustable fluid-drag wheels have gearhead feel.

Compact Joystick for tight spaces

We have two kinds of pan/tilt control for our Power Pods: wheels and joystick. When you're hiding on the floor of a car, the Joystick is helpful. Including base, it's 10 inches long, 6 inches wide and 8½ inches high. And you can work it with one hand, of course.



Familiar
positions

Wheels where you expect to find them

Lift off the Clairmont shipping-case lid — there's our gearhead-style Wheel Control Unit, ready to go. (You place the monitor on top.) As you can see in the photo, the wheels are in the familiar gearhead positions, where you're used to them.

has a Balance Mark number, for vertical-axis balance. You set the Pod's camera baseplate opposite that number — and fine-tune from there.

Our Balance Marks

Look at the photo on the left-hand page, at the top. Right next to the camera, there's a vertical plate. On its front edge, you can just see the vertical-axis Balance Marks and numbers we've engraved there.

The Zapper Box

For horizontal-axis balancing, you use the Zapper Box, with its balance meter. The battery-run Zapper Box has two uses: Balancing the camera and fitting the Power Pod back in its case.

A quicker wrap also saves money

At the wrap, the generator gets killed, cables get coiled. Is the Pod in the right configuration to fit into its case? Of course not. So you simply zap it with the Zapper Box and in it goes.

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Camera weight "right in my hand"

Director of Photography Gary Manske has shot six commercials using our Power Pods. "I'm used to working wheels," he says, "And these give me a sense of the real weight of the camera, right in my hand."

Our Balance Guide

When you rent one of our Power Pods, you get a copy of our Power Pod Balance Guide. In it we list just about all the camera/lens/magazine combinations people generally use. Each combination

The Zapper Box

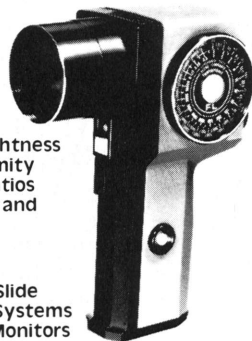
Top of page: 2 risers.
This picture: 1 riser.

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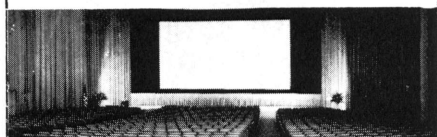
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Letters

Dracula Repartee

On page 41 of "The Two Faces of Dracula" (American Cinematographer, May 1988) you suggest that the music used in the film is derived from Swan Lake, Die Meistersinger, the Schubert "Unfinished" Symphony and Rosamunde. If I am not mistaken, what you think is Schubert's Rosamunde (heard as Dracula enters the lobby of Albert Hall) is not Rosamunde, but instead, one or two bars of the "Unfinished" (specifically the bridge to the famous cello theme in the first movement).

As this shot cuts directly to Dracula proceeding down the aisle to the closing measures of Die Meistersinger, the two separate music cues (i.e., two bars of "Unfinished" and Die Meistersinger) appear to flow together seamlessly as if they were, in fact, one continuous piece.

I have always regarded this strange effect as a continuity error on the part of the editor, especially since once Dracula makes his way to the box, introduces himself and the hall lights dim, the "Unfinished" is played again, this time from the beginning! If you listen to this again with a score, I am certain you will pick up this subtle discrepancy.

I hope that I have been of assistance in correcting an otherwise perfect effort on your part.

—Allen Cohen

Birmingham, Michigan

Spelling Bloop

In our Tokyo Pop story (June, 1988) the cinematographer's name is misspelled. We apologize to Jim Hayman who is spelled with an a, not an e.

—Ed.

Offended

In the article entitled "Beekmans Place Drawn From Life," there is an apparent direct quotation from the director of photography, Richard Glouner, concerning the crew. He states that there was no drinking on his set, and goes on to say,

"Generally, there's someone back there sipping on a brew or snorting a little something."

I am totally amazed that American Cinematographer, which is accepted as an industry authority, would publish such an irresponsible statement. I have been employed in the motion picture industry for 24 years, most of them as a grip, and I take great offense at the writer's portrayal of me and my fellow workers being habitual users of alcohol and drugs in the workplace.

I think that if Richard Glouner or the editor of the publication (who wrote this story) were to check his facts, he would find that the percentage of problems of this kind in our industry are no greater than those in any other workplace, including government, journalism, medicine, and indeed, organized religion.

For many years I have been living with the myth that all grips are drunks, who fight and swear and are somewhere lower down the food chain than anyone else. At a time when the industry as a whole is attempting to keep its image clean in front of the public, I feel that the American Cinematographer has set us back ten years. George Turner and Richard Glouner, you owe us a public apology!

—Jonathan Woolf

Sherman Oaks, California

Our story did not single out grips for any offense. (If the shoe fits, wear it.) Nor has this magazine ever directed any unkind words towards these indispensable craftsmen. We agree that the problems cited are no greater in this industry than others. (The quote in the story indicates, in fact, that the problem in the motion picture industry is lessening.) Neither Glouner (with 33 years' experience in motion pictures) nor Turner (who worked on a number of movies and TV shows) feels impelled to apologize, however.

—Ed.

Thanks for the Memory

I was sincerely impressed by Paul Mandell's article about one of my



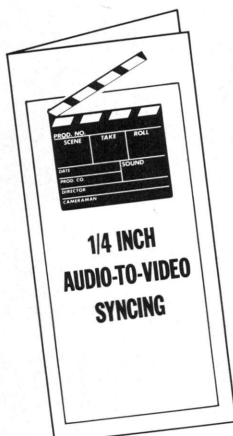
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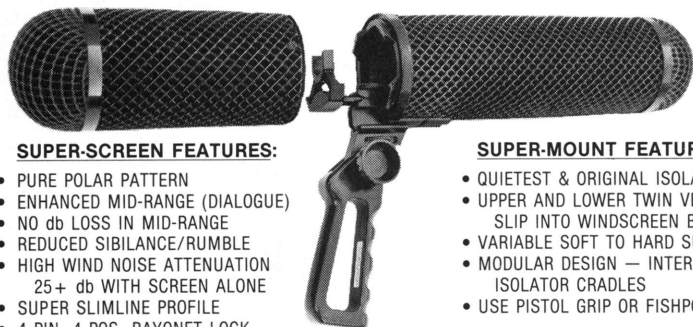


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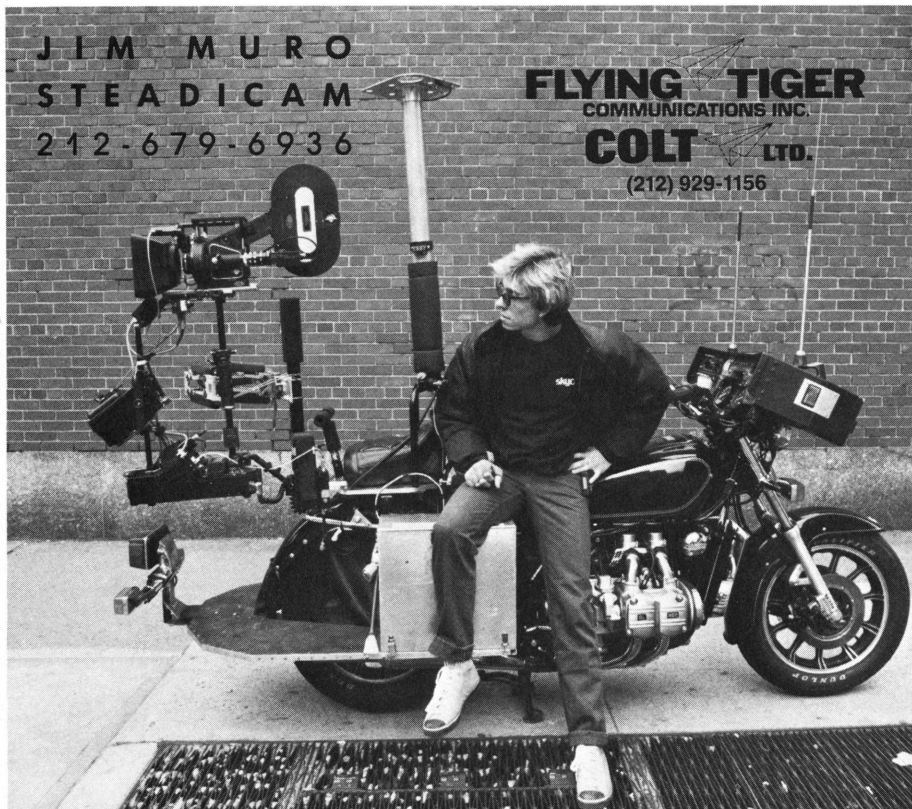
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favorite shows, "Walking Distance." I had to write a note.

There's something magical when all the right elements come together. It's such a thoughtful, poignant story of a gentle, lovely time, so far removed from today's harsh and strident television.

On reading his article, I felt Paul had gotten inside me and completely understood what I was trying to do. Above all, he understood all that Rod was thinking and writing in his moving script.

What a bunch of memories flowed over me when I read the article!

—Robert Stevens
New York, NY

The Burden of Praise

I have subscribed to American Cinematographer magazine for about ten years and have always enjoyed keeping abreast of new developments in the industry through your informative articles. In the June 1988 issue I had the unexpected pleasure of revisiting one of my favorite *Twilight Zone* episodes: "Walking Distance."

Paul Mandell's wonderful article contained such a strong visualization of this episode that after reading it, I felt I had actually sat down and seen this episode over again.

I commend American Cinematographer for publishing this type of article and applaud Paul Mandell for his scholarly research and devotion to a great episode of a history making series.

—John Michael Pelech
New York, NY

American Cinematographer welcomes letters. Send them to: Letters, American Cinematographer, P.O. Box 2230, Hollywood, CA 90078. Please include your name and address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

OpTex complete 1000 Lens Conversions



IN 1975 OpTex opened up new creative possibilities for cinematographers with our matched series of telephoto lenses: the world-renowned OpTex Canon conversions. OpTex have now completed over 1000 conversions.

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The **K-35** series and the new 16mm format **C 8x7** 7-56mm T2.1 zoom lens are also available from OpTex. OpTex are appointed Canon Technical Representatives.

OpTex-converted Canon lenses are available for rental in the US from:
General Camera Corp., 540 West 36th. Street, New York, NY 10018, USA.
Tel: 212 594 8700.

General Camera West, 940 North Orange Drive, Hollywood, California 90038, USA. Tel: 213 464 3800.

Cine Video Tech Miami, 7330 NE 4 Court, Miami, Florida 33138, USA.
Tel: 305 754 2611.

Cine Video Inc., 948 North Cahuenga Boulevard, Hollywood, California 90038, USA. Tel: 213 464 6200.

Otto Nemenz International, 870 North Vine Street, Hollywood, California 90038, USA. Tel: 213 469 2774.

Roessel Cine Photo Tech., 48-20 70th. Street, Woodside, New York 11377, USA. Tel: 718 424 1600.

Victor Duncan Inc., 6305 North O'Connor Bldg., Irving, Texas 75039, USA.
Tel: 214 869 0200.

Victor Duncan Inc., 1575 Northside Drive, NW, Suite 355, Atlanta, Georgia 30318, USA. Tel: 404 355 3001.

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OpTex, 22-26 Victoria Road, New Barnet, Herts EN4 9PF, UK.
Tel: 01-441 2199 (24-hr answering). Telex: 8955869 OpTex G. Fax: 01-449 3646.

The Bookshelf

by George L. George

Documenting the years that established Hollywood as the world's film capital, and at the same time compiling an absorbing personal memoir, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.'s **Salad Days** recalls his maturing amid the industry's onward rush. A spellbinding narrative told with wry humor and appealing modesty, the book evokes his love affairs, marriages and divorces, his friendships with international celebrities, and the numerous films that showcased his versatile acting ability. (Doubleday, NYC, \$19.95).

Director Robert Parrish chronicles his adventurous life in an entertaining two-volume memoir, **Hollywood Doesn't Live Here Anymore** and **Growing Up in Hollywood** (a re-issue of the original 1967 book). It covers, in a relaxed and humorous style, Parrish's career from child actor in Chaplin's *City Lights* to director of the *Casino Royale* extravaganza. (Little Brown, NYC, \$17.95 and \$17.95/9.95).

A comprehensive study by Thomas J. Slater, **Milos Forman** combines a detailed biography of the director, a complete filmography from his early Czech films to *Amadeus*, and an extensively annotated bibliography of books and periodicals. This scholarly work offers invaluable insights into Forman's philosophical and artistic development. (Greenwood, Westport, CT, \$35.95).

Lynn Feldman Miller's book, metaphorically titled **The Hand That Holds the Camera**, explores the lives and work of seven women film and video directors. Linda Yellen, the only one of professional standing, successfully produced and directed big time CBS specials (*Jacoba Timerman*, *Playing for Time*). The others, among them Michelle Citron and Amalie Rothschild, specialize notably in documentaries and experimental production. (Garland, NYC, \$27).

In **Wide Screen Movies**, Robert E. Carr and R. M. Hayes trace the evolution of a process first unveiled in the early 1920s and adopted by Hollywood in the 50s as a way of fighting the growing TV

competition. The book discusses extensively Cinerama, CinemaScope, the Soviet Kinopanorama and a score of other techniques, and includes an international filmography of some 1200 wide screen feature films. (McFarland, Jefferson, NC, \$39.95).

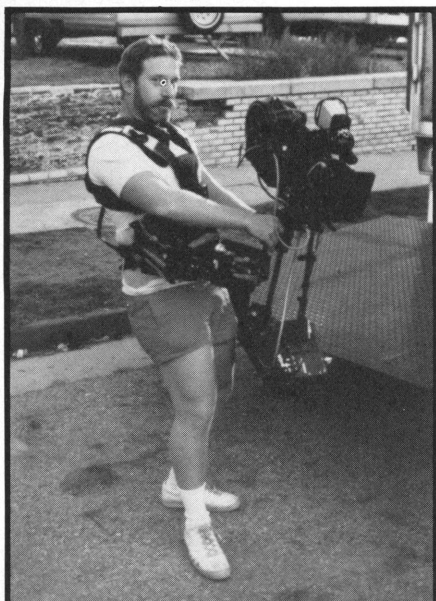
An enjoyable evocation of films of the 1920s decade, **Silent Magic** by Ivan Butler reviews important movies and leading personalities, and records the industry's progress against a background of world events. (Ungar, NYC, \$24.95).

An impressive tribute to the creators of animated films, **Masters of Animation** by John Halas, himself a renowned animator, is a worldwide survey of the genre's achievements. Beautifully illustrated and generously informative, it covers animation's technical and artistic development from Emile Cohl's line drawings to present-day computer graphics. (Salem House, Topsfield, MA, \$24.95).

Donald Bogle chronicles a century of achievements by black performers in a lively, knowledgeable and richly illustrated reference work, **Blacks in American Films and Television**. He discusses some 700 movies and 100 TV shows from a 1903 production of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to the recent Spike Lee's *She's Gotta Have It*. Profiles of showbiz stars and leading personages, and a useful bibliography, complete this significant volume. (Garland, NYC, \$60).

The abrupt ending of Larry Parks's film acting career, destroyed by allegations of Communist sympathies during the McCarthy witchhunts, is examined in Doug McClelland's engrossing **Blackface to Blacklist**. It documents the 1946 production of *The Jolson Story* in which Parks impersonated the popular singer, and focuses on the personal tragedy that ensued, underlining its significant social impact. (Scarecrow, Metuchen, NJ, \$29.50).

The screen and stage career of Lorenzo Tucker (1907-86), a black performer popular in ethnic milieus, is reprised by Richard Grupenhoff in **The Black Valen-**



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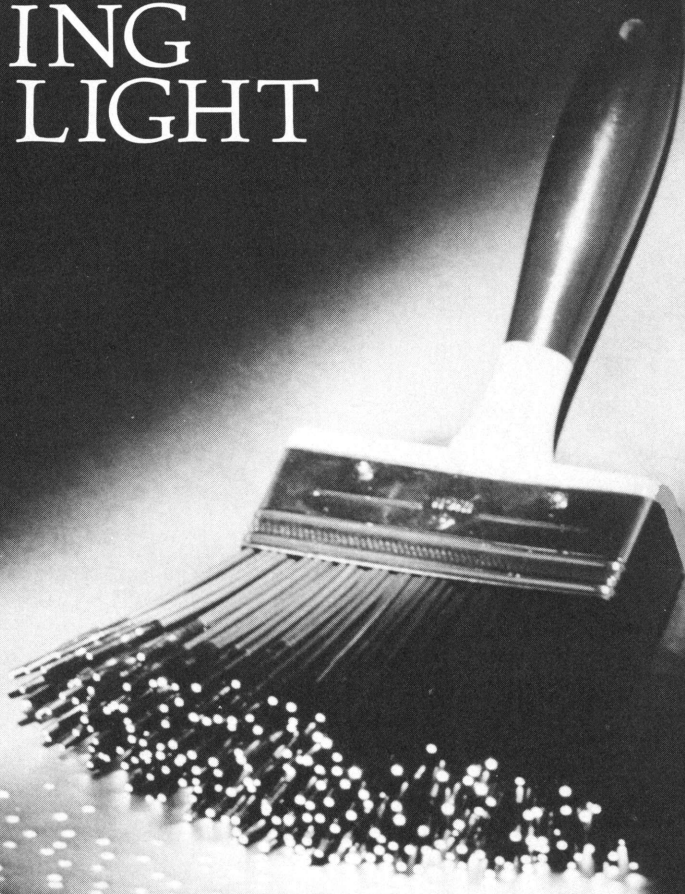
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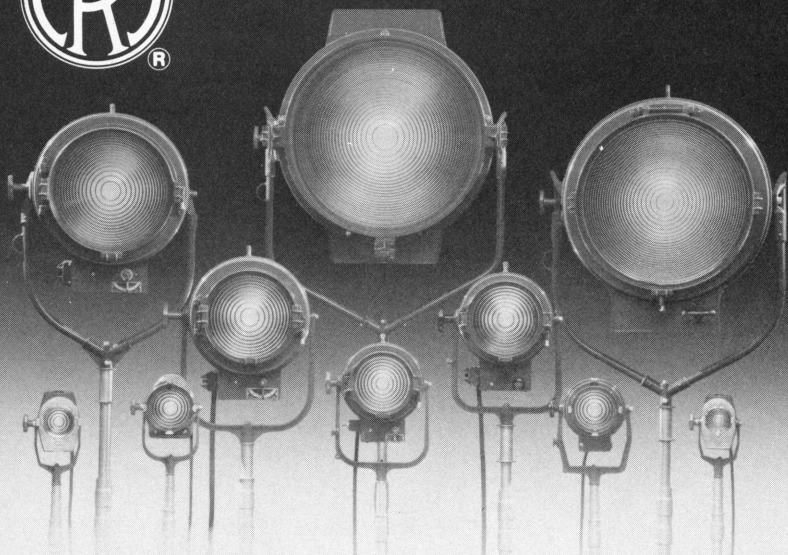
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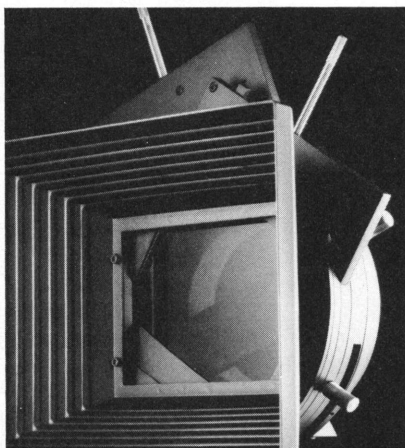
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tino. It describes vividly the adverse economic and social conditions of the late 20s – Tucker's most successful years – and offers insights into the evolution of black entertainment. (*Scarecrow, Metuchen, NJ, \$22.50*).

Complementing the transition from colonialism to independence, many African nations developed a film industry explored by Françoise Pfaff in **Twenty-five Black African Filmmakers.** Her well-researched study examines the work of these directors, the themes and style of their films, and the conflict between indigenous traditions and Western values. (*Greenwood, Westport, CT, \$49.95*).

The odyssey of a black American filmmaker's first feature film is told in **Spike Lee's Gotta Have It**, a personal journal of the 18 harrowing months it took him to create the movie. Included is the film's screenplay, a humorously frank image of ghetto life. (*Fireside/S&S, NYC, \$9.95*).

Several current biographies include **James Stewart: A Wonderful Life** by Tony Thomas, a revealing biography and a thoroughgoing 77-feature filmography (*Citadel, Secaucus, NJ, \$15.95*); Garry O'Connor's **Olivier: A Celebration**, a symposium of the actor's peers praising his distinguished career (*Dodd Mead, NYC, \$22.95*); and James Oram's **G'Day America**, an upbeat biography of the popular Aussie star, Paul Hogan (*Salem House, Topsfield, MA, \$12.95*).

Actresses are remembered with **The Unabridged Marilyn** by Randall Riese and Neal Hitchens, an A-to-Z encyclopedia compiling facts from every facet of her life and career (*Congdon & Weed/Contemporary, NYC, \$25*); Emerson & Pfaff, in **Country Girl**, portray Sissy Spacek, a dedicated actress and mother (*St. Martin's NYC, \$14.95*); and Axel Madsen's **Gloria and Joe** recalls Gloria Swanson's long-time affair with banker/producer Joseph P. Kennedy against the turbulent environment of an expanding film industry (*Arbor/Morrow, NYC, \$18.95*). △

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Photo By Barbara Cline

MICHAEL NORMAN Director — Emerald Films

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Choosing the right film stock is very important. Recently I find myself choosing AGFA-XT again and again! The requirements for reproducing the grit and grime of an urban street scene are different from those of capturing the vibrant colors of a spring morning on a southern estate. Taking AGFA-XT into settings with unique lighting problems is a critical test of its ability to capture the subtleties inherent in each set-up.

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New Production Camera Uses High Density Chips



A color production camera being introduced by Sony Professional Video Division offers the highest resolution and picture quality available in a CCD camera. The new DXC-M7 incorporates a higher density, "768" Interline-Transfer CCD chip array with signal processing technology developed to complement the unique characteristics of CCDs.

The key to the improved characteristics of the DXC-M7 camera is a new 3-chip Interline-Transfer CCD image sensor prism block that packs 380,000 picture elements into each tiny chip. Sony's "768" chip, as it is referred to because of its 768 (horizontal) and 493 (vertical) usable pixel count, offers many exceptional performance values including over 700 TV lines of resolution, signal to noise ratio of more than 60dB, sensitivity of F5.6 at 2,000 lux and the virtual elimination of vertical smear in all but the most severe circumstances. The DXC-M7 camera also represents the first application of the variable speed electronic shutter to the Interline-Transfer CCD in the professional video industry.

The DXC-M7 camera's variety of advanced controls, located on the camera head, are accessible without removing the side cover. In addition to basic control functions, users can access knee point control, detail level control, pedestal level control,

gamma controls and auto iris override, among others, with real time alpha numeric readouts in the viewfinder. A self-diagnostics function located in the camera head detects errors in operation and set-up and also informs the user in the view finder.

The camera's highly reliable and precise internal CPU offers a variety of fully automated features including auto iris, auto white balance, a total of eight white balance memories and auto black balance with black setting. The Dynamic Contrast Control (DCC) circuit is capable of reproducing detailed highlights even in extreme lighting conditions.

The CCU-M7, the newly designed camera control unit, allows remote control of the DXC-M7 by means of a serial data transmission via CCZ-A cables. Outfitted with a maximum cable length of up to 1,000 feet, the CCU-M7 offers many sophisticated control functions including red, blue and master gamma; red, blue and master pedestal; gain selection, output selection of Y/R-Y/B-Y, RGB, Y/C, or composite, function status display, shutter speed selection, auto iris override, white balance and R/B gain control. The DXC-M7 can also be controlled using the CCU-M3.

For more information: Sony, 9 West 57th St., NY, NY 10019, (212) 418-9427.

New HMI

A new 24³/₄" 12,000 watt HMI Fresnel Mole Solar-Arc Solarspot® has been added to the family of Mole-Richardson HMI fixtures.

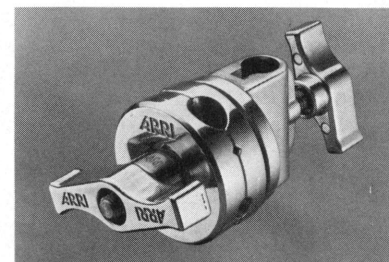
This new design features vertical circular interlocking channels for better ventilation and more efficient cooling. A new positive ignition system has been added. The back of the fixture tilts out for easy access to globe for relamping. A new cold mirror reflector gives high light output with less heat on the subject and a consistent color balance for the rated life of the globe.

The 24³/₄" Fresnel lens offers a larger source of light in this efficient, high output fixture. The smooth even field from spot-to-flood makes this focusable source of daylight illumination ideal for use as a daylight booster, key-light or fill-light.

The new ballast is smaller, lighter and noise free. Lifting bars on front and rear make handling easier. Its large air filled tires offer improved mobility.

The pushbutton daylight control means no daylight filters are needed.

For more information: Mole-Richardson, 937 North Sycamore Avenue, Hollywood, CA 90038-2384 U.S.A., Telephone (213) 851-0111.



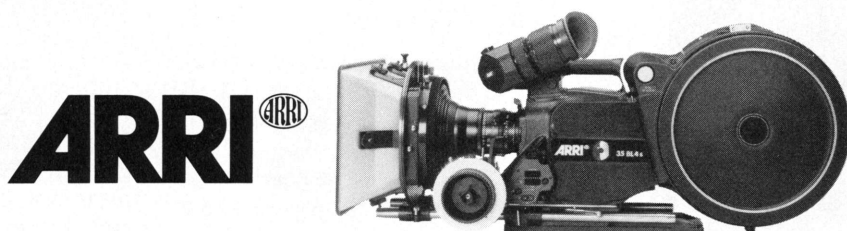
ARRI Lighting & Grip Equipment

Arriflex Corporation has unveiled *ARRI Grip*, its line of lighting and grip equipment.

ARRI Grip begins as a complete line, featuring century stands, lighting and

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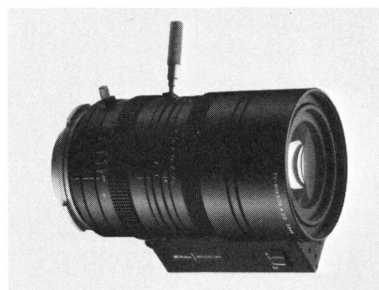
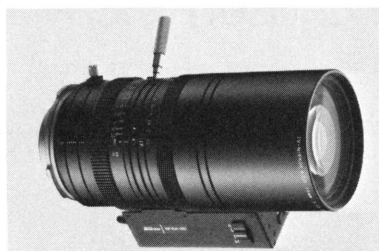
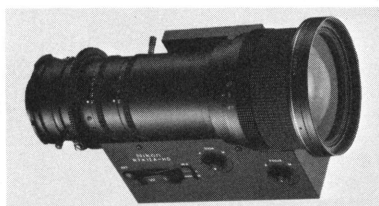
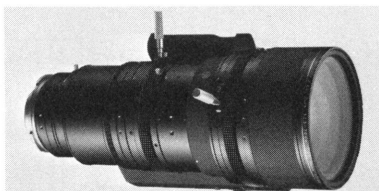
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For more information: Arriflex, 600 N. Victory Blvd., Burbank, CA 91502; (818) 841-7070.



TV Lenses

Nikon has introduced a new line of ENG/EFP lenses for $\frac{2}{3}$ -inch CCD TV cameras, and lenses for High Definition TV cameras.

Features of the new lenses include: compactness of design for ease of handling under all conditions; the use of Nikon's exclusive ED (Extra-low Dispersion) glass to assure optimum color rendition and high resolution; the use of Nikon's exclusive anti-reflection coating which minimizes ghosts and flares significantly; the use of lightweight optical glass; the use of special lightweight metal alloys; and many other

pluses that make for a state-of-the-art product.

For further information: Nikon Inc., 623 Stewart Avenue, Garden City, NY 11530, (516) 222-0200.

Advanced Betacam Tape Formula

Agfa-Gevaert, Inc., has introduced an advanced Betacam tape formulation for ENG and other broadcast applications.

Agfa Broadcast Pro Betacam is noted for its operational stability and an exceptionally high video signal-to-noise ratio. Rigorous lab and field testing have proven that Agfa Broadcast Pro Betacam cassettes will maintain a constant output, even after frequent playback, still picture editing, and under the most difficult climatic and operating conditions.

Other Betacam Broadcast Pro features include very low dropout rates, a static-resistant tape coating to control tape scratching caused by dust accumulation, and an extrudable cassette shell constructed of the finest ABS plastic. The Betacam hard-box case features a high-tech design, fitted with hinged hooks that are compatible with existing broadcast and studio tape archive systems.

For more information: Magnetic Tape Division, Agfa-Gevaert, Inc., 100 Challenger Road, Ridgefield Park, New Jersey 07660; (201) 440-2500.



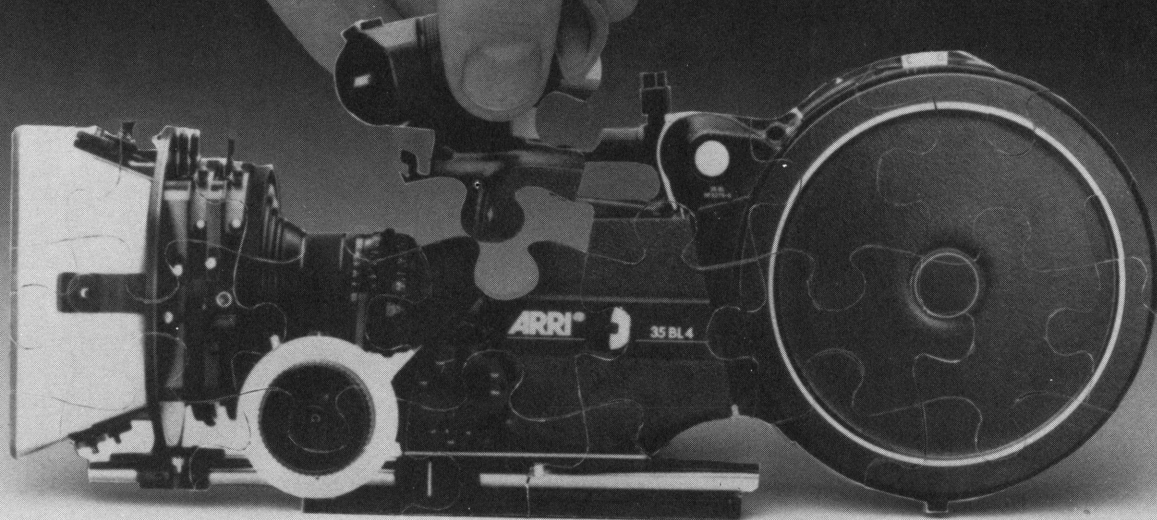
Film Changing Tent

The Harrison Film Changing Tent is a portable tabletop darkroom designed to replace the "black bag" for loading motion picture film. The tent was created by 659 camera assistant Patty Harrison to overcome the problems of loading film in the field without a darkroom. A spacious interior (36" x 27") accommodates any 1000' film magazine and 1000' film can. No more fabric caught in magazine lids, sweating hands, and lack of working space!

The tent is constructed of two

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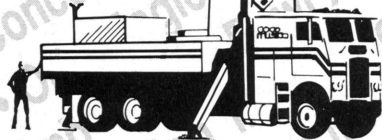
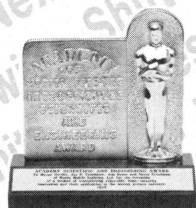


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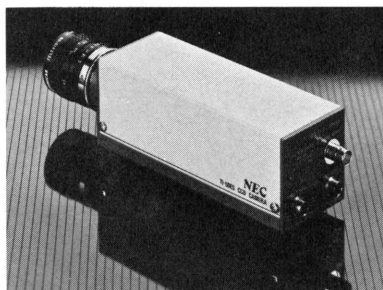
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layers of fabric just like a conventional "black bag." The exterior silver tent fabric is reflective and water-resistant to keep the interior cool and dry. The floor of the tent is a heavy packcloth for extra durability. The inner tent fabric is a black neoprene material to insure lightproof loading. All inside seams are finished with seam tape to make them stronger and more resistant to wear and tear.

Tent poles are made of anodized aluminum which is lightweight, flexible, and extremely strong. Pole sections are 12" long and are shock-corded for quick assembly. Elasticized arm sleeves are set into the tent door for easy access to the inside of the tent. The Harrison Changing Tent comes with a stuff sack, which tent and poles fit into for storage and traveling.

For more information: Camera Essentials, 6414 1/2 W. Olympic Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048, (213) 931-9648.



Industrial Camera Line

A broad line of CCD cameras designed for industrial applications was featured at NAB by the industrial video group of NEC America's Broadcast Equipment Division.

The camera line includes four models that are specially equipped with electronic shutters to provide extremely sharp images of high speed objects for clear playback in slow motion or stop action. These cameras are well suited for manufacturing or research applications involving high speed motion analysis or non-destructive testing.

Other CCD cameras in the NEC line include one and two chip, black and white and color cameras for factory automation and quality control. Typical applications for this equipment include measurement of product part dimensions, position and control of machine tools, robotic control and input for image processing systems. All cameras in the NEC line are designed with durability features that enable them to be used in almost any environment, including

those that would be hostile to a normal tube camera. Each has a die-cast body which encloses 100 percent solid state electronics, enabling the cameras to withstand the abuse and vibration of a factory floor or loading dock area. They are equally well suited to serve as a critical component in an intricate motion analysis system.

The cameras share advantages of CCD cameras, including the elimination of burn-in (the retention of an image after the object is removed) and geometric distortion, as well as resistance to shock and vibration. The image sensing device in the cameras is a semi-conductor, solid state chip that is extremely stable and long lasting.

The electronically shuttered chip is less prone to light loss and can be used in lower light applications more readily than mechanically shuttered cameras. Due to the motion stopping ability of the shutter, objects will not blur when they move across the screen.

The electronically shuttered cameras in the NEC line include the TI50-ES with a variable speed electronic shutter for speeds from 1/60th to 1/200th of a second in field mode, and 1/60th to 1/120th of a second in frame mode; TI23-A with a selectable electronic shutter that freezes the action at 1/100th of a second; the NC-15, with a shutter that operates at 1/100th of a second, and the SP3A-UW designed for oceanic exploration, nuclear power, pipelines and related uses. The latter model features a variable speed shutter with speeds of 1/60th, 1/125th, 1/250th, 1/500th, 1/1000th, and 1/2000th of a second.

For more information: NEC America, (312) 860-7600.



Image Stabilizer System

Schweim Technology demonstrated a "concept prototype" of its GX-3 mini image stabilizer at NAB 1988 in Las Vegas.

The GX-3, easily the smallest video image stabilizing system, weighs less than 5 pounds in its prototype version, including the CCD camera.

The full integrated camera/lens



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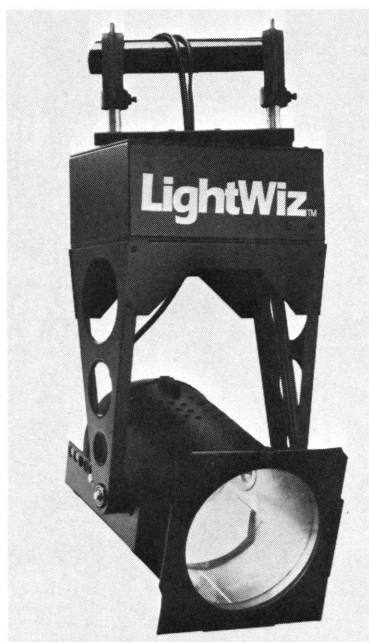
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system is enclosed in a 4-inch diameter cylinder only 10 inches long. The GX-3 was designed for image stabilization applications that require very small size, low light level capability, and a wide angle. The prototype is built around the Hitachi VK-C150 CCD camera with 350 lines of resolution.

The GX-3 prototype features a focal length of 12.5 to 75mm with a 2x extender available, a 1.8F lens, and full remote control.

For more information: Schwem Technology Corporation, 3305 Vincent Road, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523, (415) 935-1226.



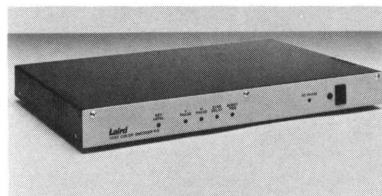
New Electric Yoke

LightWiz, a new remote control electric yoke, is now available from The Great American Market. It will hold a wide variety of lighting fixtures for use in all facets of the entertainment industry. A unique cradle design allows the user to position and mount each light for optimum balance and weight distribution. The tilt function has been engineered to compensate for out-of-balance situations and the unit will automatically adjust for variations in the weight of the mounted load. Pan capacity is 400°; tilt capacity is 100°.

LightWiz is controlled by the 0-10V DC control voltage provided by many lighting consoles—no special control equipment is needed. Light "moves" may be programmed with conventional cues in a memory board.

LightWiz is 12" wide and 24" high in its vertical position. It weighs 25 lbs.

including two C-clamps. For more information: The Great American Market, 826 N. Cole Ave., Hollywood CA 90038; (213) 461-0200.



Paint & Graphics System

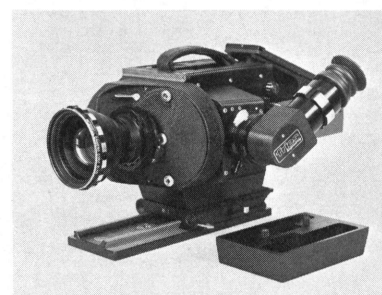
Laird Telemedia has developed a new 1540 Paint & Graphics Option to the 1500 Character Generator.

The 1540 Paint and Graphics option is a plug-in PC board and software package for the 1500 Character Generator.

The 1540 operates at the same 35 nsec. resolution as the 1500, providing for 1506 horizontal pixels x 483 vertical lines. In addition, the 1540 can assign any of 65,536 colors to any pixel. All 65,536 colors can be used in a single graphic. The manipulation features, high resolution, and color capability of the 1540 provide the user with an extremely powerful creative tool.

When used in conjunction with other options such as Laird's camera entry, and font developer II, the 1540 becomes a complete graphics and paint workstation.

For more information contact:
Laird Telemedia, Inc., 2424 South 2570 West, Salt Lake City, Utah 84119, (801) 972-5900.



Riser Base

Fries Engineering has extended their system of updates for the Mitchell MK2/S35R camera with the introduction of a riser base that makes the camera compatible with the Arriflex balance plate, follow focus, matte box and related accessories. The riser base quickly and easily bolts onto the bottom of the MK2/S35R utilizing the existing mounting holes. Once in place, the

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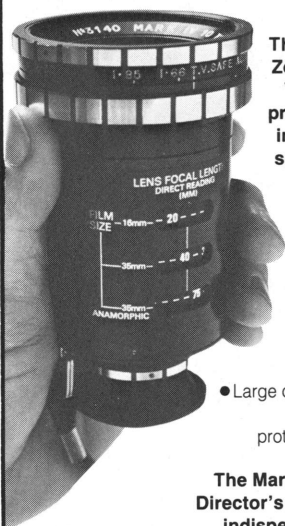
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camera's new base mounting holes coincide with the Arri balance plate, and the camera's lens centerline matches that of the Arri matte box and follow focus.

This base is part of a complete update package that Fries Engineering offers for the MK2/S35R which includes the recently introduced Vidiflex 2 Video Assist with orientable viewfinder, and the 120M2 all-in-one motor for single frame, crystal and high speed work with remote control.

For more information: Fries Engineering, Inc., 12032 Vose Street, North Hollywood, CA 91605, (818) 765-3600.

The Rank Cintel 3-perforation kit is suitable for all Enhanced MkIIIC Digiscan III and Digiscan 4:2:2 telecines fitted with Varispeed and X-Y zoom. All existing telecine functions are retained in both 3-perforation and 4-perforation modes.

Three-perforation film stock eliminates the wasted blank area occupied by the traditional 4th-perforation, which is generally used for film splicing. Three-perforation film production maintains the standard 1.85:1 (widescreen) aspect ratio of standard 4-perforation film.

Once the Rank Cintel 3-perfora-



35mm Wide Angle Lenses

OpTex is launching a brand new range of Wide Angle Macro Lenses for 35mm motion picture cameras, utilizing high quality Nikon optics. The range, known as S V S Nikon lenses is made up of the following 15mm T3.5, 20mm T2.8, 24mm T2.8, 28mm T2.8 and 35mm T2.8. All lenses have the following features:

A minimum object distance ranging from 0.15m/infinity to 0.20m/infinity with M O D being calculated from the film plane and not the front of the lens.

Lens rotation of less than 360° from M O D to infinity; standard pitch gear rings on focus and iris; focusing in the conventional motion picture direction.

Lenses supplied in a dual purpose mount - BNCR/Arri Standard. Lenses mounted in PL will also be available.

For more information: Optical & Textile Ltd. 22/26 Victoria Road, New Barnet, Herts., EN4 9PF, England.

3-Perf. 35mm Film Gate

Rank Cintel, Inc. has introduced the first factory-approved 35mm gate and adaptor kit for its Enhanced MkIIIC line of flying-spot telecines. This new gate, which has been engineered for precise telecine compatibility, allows the video transfer of 3-perforation in addition to standard 4-perforation 35mm film.

tion kit is installed, the Enhanced MkIIIC automatically sets its gate to the correct 3-perforation or 4-perforation operation parameters, due to an inbuilt identifying connector on the 3-perforation gate.

The Rank Cintel 35mm 3-perforation steadyguide gate kit comes complete with identifying connector, 3-perforation sepmag sprocket, 4-perforation sepmag sprocket, set of I.C.'s, and fitting and modification instructions.

For more information: Rank Cintel, Inc., 13340 North Saticoy, Unit F, North Hollywood, CA 91605, (818) 765-7265.

New Ray Tracing Software

Cubicomp Corporation announces a breakthrough in imaging software for PC-based computer graphics systems: the availability of ray tracing on RACE™ render accelerator boards for PictureMaker® 3-D animation systems.

The combination of Cubicomp's advanced ray tracing and the RACE render accelerator means that PictureMaker users can create and render ray traced images at speeds which make them practical for day-to-day graphics production.

The linkage of the advanced imaging software, which creates lifelike reflections on any surface, with PictureMaker's powerful render accelerator boards, was introduced at the National Association of

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What with all the new light sources lurking about, every location has its own breed of lighting monsters. Besides daylight and tungsten, there's fluorescent, HMI, Mercury, Sodium, CSI, and CDI.

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Lou LaRose balances light sources right on the set with Cinegel's color correction filters. He considers Cinegel to be an essential tool in his award-winning work on TV commercials and special TV network productions.

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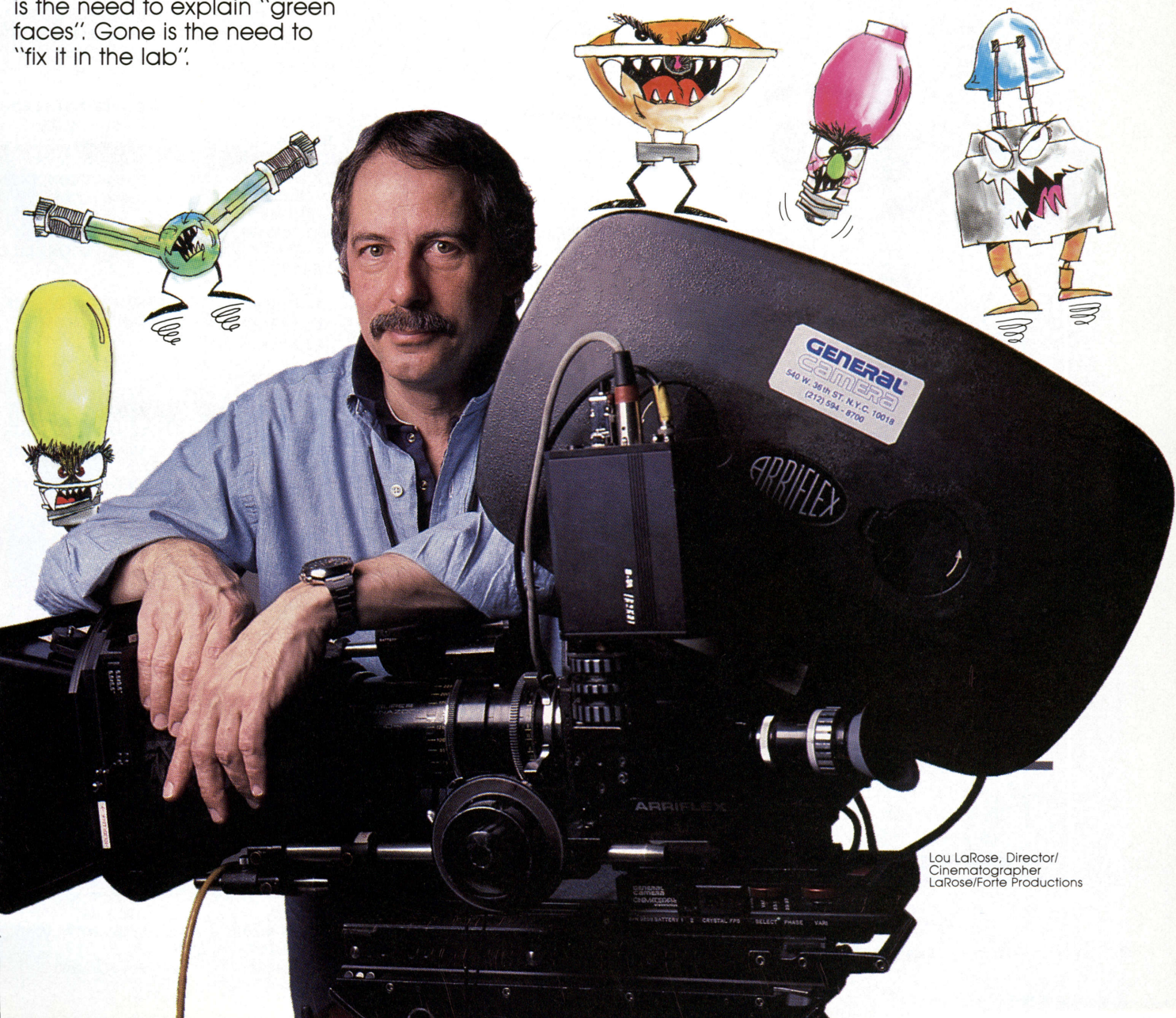
"Jungle Book" swatchbook and "Lighting In The Jungle" handbook. Both are free at your rental house, Rosco dealer, or Rosco.

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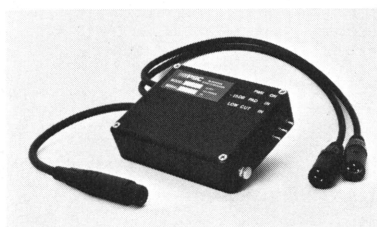
Broadcasters (NAB) Convention, April 9-12.

The ray tracing program takes into account the surface properties of the objects; i.e., reflective and refractive objects, the depth or number of reflections designated in the scene, and multiple colored light sources. Shadows are also automatically produced, if the user wishes, with the user having the ability to determine which objects will or will not be in shadow.

The software is available as part of the new PictureMaker Version 3.0 software which Cubicomp is also introducing at NAB.

RACE render accelerator boards provide a processing subsystem with a raw processing speed of ten million instructions per second that turns PictureMaker systems into a 20-MFLOPS render engine without sacrificing any system functionality.

For more information: 21325 Cabot Blvd., Hayward, CA 94545, Telephone: (415) 887-1300.



Power Supply for Mike

The "MP-48 PH STEREO" is a newly designed microphone battery power supply made especially for use with the Neumann 190i stereo microphone, manufactured by Professional Sound Corporation in Los Angeles.

The box provides 48 volt phantom powering along with switchable 15 dB pad and low cut filter (- 6 dB at 100 Hz).

For more information: Audio Services Corporation, 10639 Riverside Drive, North Hollywood, CA 91602, (800) 228-4429.

Pacific Video, Inc. Expands

Hollywood-based Pacific Video, Inc., has announced the acquisition of the assets of United Color Lab as part of a major multi-million dollar research and development oriented expansion program.

The UCL acquisition comes on the heels of Pacific Video's acquiring controlling interest in Tegra Enterprises, Inc., a company which operates film lab and video

post-production facilities in Vancouver, Canada.

The new lab is an important element in Pacific's long range plan for providing a total one-stop post-production service facility for film producers who use Pacific Video's Electronic Laboratory™ services.

For more information: Pacific Video, Inc., 809 N. Cahuenga Blvd., Hollywood, CA 90038, (213) 462-6266.



Support System

The Sachtler so called "Video 10" support is a complete system of a dolly, tripod with integrated spreader and elevation column and a very compact Sachtler fluid head, for CCD-cameras in professional and industrial use.

The fluid head features Sachtler fluid damping and touch & go locking mechanism to mount the camera. To compensate for the camera's tilting-momentum the Video 10 fluid head has a torsion spring built in for dynamic counterbalancing.

The whole unit (head, tripod, elevation and spreader) weighs less than 5 kgs (11 lbs) and therefore is compatible with the most compact CCD-cameras. The dolly folds up for transport, has snap-in locks for the tripod, is very light weight (1.5 kgs/ 3.3 lbs).

The height range of the Video 10 tripod (75cm-174cm/29in.-68.5in.) allows a horizontal camera for sitting as well as standing persons.

For more information: Sachtler GmbH, Dieselstraße 16, 8046 Garching, Germany. △

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D.O.A.—Classic Reprised

by George Turner

Produced by Ian Sander & Laura Ziskin
Directed by Rocky Morton and Annabel Jankel
Yuri Neyman, director of photography

"I think everybody can relate to the idea that if you have 24 hours to live and you go to a restaurant where they tell you there's a 45-minute wait, chances are you're going to eat someplace else," said Ian Sander, producer in partnership with Laura Ziskin of the 1988 version of *D.O.A.* As a child, Ziskin saw the 1949 original on television and never forgot it. From this grew the idea of updating the timeless premise as a contemporary thriller.

The new *D.O.A.* follows the broad outlines of the old, which was made four decades ago, but it was rewritten by mystery specialist Edward Pogue to accommodate purely 1988 photographic and editing techniques that exploit color and action to the limit. It was directed by the British team of Rocky Morton and Annabel Jankel, who

earned reputations for wit and style through their work in making innovative commercials and creating the video character, *Max Headroom*. Abetting their desire to film a dazzling visual experience, Russian-born director of photography Yuri Neyman contributed a wealth of imagination and skill.

This *D.O.A.* utilizes a framing sequence that almost duplicates that of the first version, even to the extent of being in black and white although the bulk of the picture is in color. College professor Dexter Cornell (Dennis Quaid) staggers into the police station and reports his own murder. Flashback. Unwittingly poisoned by a fatal, irreversible toxin, Dex learns he has 24 hours to live and is determined to find out who is responsible and why. Aided by Sydney (Meg Ryan),

a pretty but naive student, he plunges into a maelstrom of hidden scandals among the local aristocracy, deadly underworld characters, wild auto chases, a fight in a tar pit – and more killings. Before he dies, Dex pins his murder on his supposed pal, an insanely ambitious fellow professor, and exacts a hard-earned vengeance.

The picture was filmed in and around the historic city of Austin, Texas, capital of the state and home of the University of Texas. During the weeks that the company was headquartered there, Austin experienced record high temperatures and a series of tropical storms, the worst in a half-century. The steamy, unsettled weather added dramatic emphasis to performances – the script calls for an unseasonal heat wave during the

Christmas season – as well as enhancing photographic texture.

Colorful locations were utilized: the state capital building and grounds, campuses of several educational institutions, the police department, the county jail on the fourth floor of the courthouse, a horse farm, hospitals, a classic mansion, and the music clubs along Sixth Street – a favorite haunt of the college students.

"When I got the call from the production office and learned it was being made by the people who did *Max Headroom*, I thought it sounded interesting," Neyman said. "It had good visual opportunities as a remake of the classic. There are very dramatic images. We wanted to make a modern *film noir*, in color. We exchanged opinions and discussed what degree of visual stylization we wanted. The camera plays a psychological role in the film. It begins on a happy pre-Christmas day but there is quite a changed atmosphere when Dexter is under investigation as a possible murderer. As Dexter deteriorates from the poison in his system, so does the 'health' of the cinematography, and the scenes begin to take on an intentionally distorted quality.

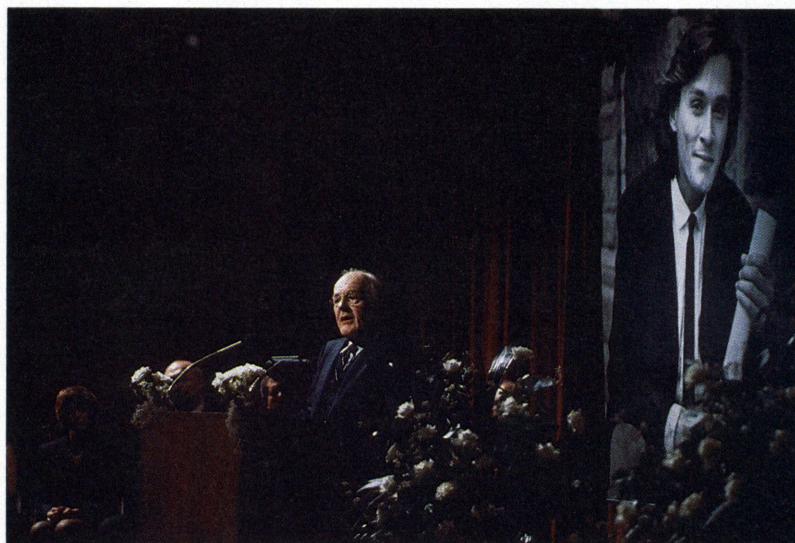
"We storyboarded in pre-production. Storyboards help a lot. They are very tricky things, but very good for getting ideas and maintaining directions, for letting you know where you're steering, how to go back and forth. At the least you have your course laid out. Basically, we tried to reproduce the storyboards as closely as was feasible, but, of course, locations and situations change some ideas."

Neyman noted that working with a pair of British directors from the animation-computer image world presented the kind of off-beat collaboration that makes for an unusual product. "When there are two directors, it's never easy, especially if they have worked together for many years. They have their own language of communication; they understand each other, and they have very strong ideas about filmmaking. My Russian training

was quite different from their British training, but somehow it all came together. I wouldn't say it was the easy way, because we sometimes saw different ways to do things, but for us the picture is the thing. We share the same visual sympathies and studied the same American and European artists. Final results are what count, and we got what we all wanted to get. I think we created, somehow, a different look of *film noir* – a modern noir look.

"We did a lot of home-

work to find the look of the picture. We wanted it to be sort of in the traditional style of the genre – a revitalization of a tradition. Basically, the conception was to create the appearance of the old film noir, reminiscent of the style and yet different. By using modern technology and the new high speed emulsions we can light differently and more subtly. With the old low speed films very strong sources of light were needed, and when you start with a strong source, everything else follows. In this case we



Opposite page:
Frame enlargement
of Dennis Quaid,
photographed in
Neyman's "modern
noir" style. Left:
Even the awards
ceremony at the
university is light-
ed to suggest omi-
nous portents.
Below: Lighting
at a nightclub bar
emphasizes the
turmoil in Quaid's
mind.





Above: Car crashes into tar pit in a notable stunt sequence. Below: Storyboard sketch provided the concept of the action.



used small units, small amounts of light, and it brings a quite different look. I used lots of bounce light and I like to use large sources, but sometimes I like to combine large sources with inkies and babies in order to create sharp spots."

Neyman feels that the use of color in a genre that traditionally exploited black and white adds possibilities for dramatic photography.

"If the film had been done in black and white instead of color, it would have been a replica; it would have taken away from the fact that this *D.O.A.* is a modern story and it would be impossible to avoid comparisons with films made in the '40s. The stylization is a very delicate matter. Whether we like it or not, our vision of movies, TV and photographs is now color. The psy-

chology of vision has changed.

"Almost everything was done in Austin. We shot for one day in Dallas – but that scene is out of the picture – and at a horse farm some distance from Austin. We built a lot of interior sets, and Richard Amend, the production designer, did a great job of it. Dick's office, Meg's apartment, the elevator shaft, and most of the hospital interiors were sets, for example. We shot hospital pickups later in Los Angeles."

An unusual man-made setting was a tar pit, which was constructed on the campus of Southwest Texas University. The bubbling morass, into which an auto and several stunt artists are plunged, was eight feet deep and was designed to resemble the famed tar pits at Rancho LaBrea in Los Angeles. Local visitors to the set thought that oil had been discovered on the campus. The supposed asphalt was actually a black, biodegradable mixture of clay and mud, which was brought in by the truck-load and repoured for each take. The concoction was water soluble because Quaid, Robin Johnson, Christopher Neame, and the stunt doubles had to be immersed in it. Lights and a bridge completed the effect of a prized geological site.

"We used two Arri BL4s, which I find very easy to work with, and an Arri 3 for second unit and pickup shots," Neyman said. "We used high speed lenses exclusively, because except for a few scenes all of the film is night. For some of the stunts we used as many as four cameras shooting from different angles and at different speeds. We used two kinds of dollies and we had cranes for a couple of sequences, including the one in Dallas that's not in the film any more. Most of our equipment was furnished by Otto Nemenz in Hollywood and we used some rental houses in Texas when we needed extra stuff. My key crew members were a mixture of New York and Los Angeles, and we had people from Dallas working with us."

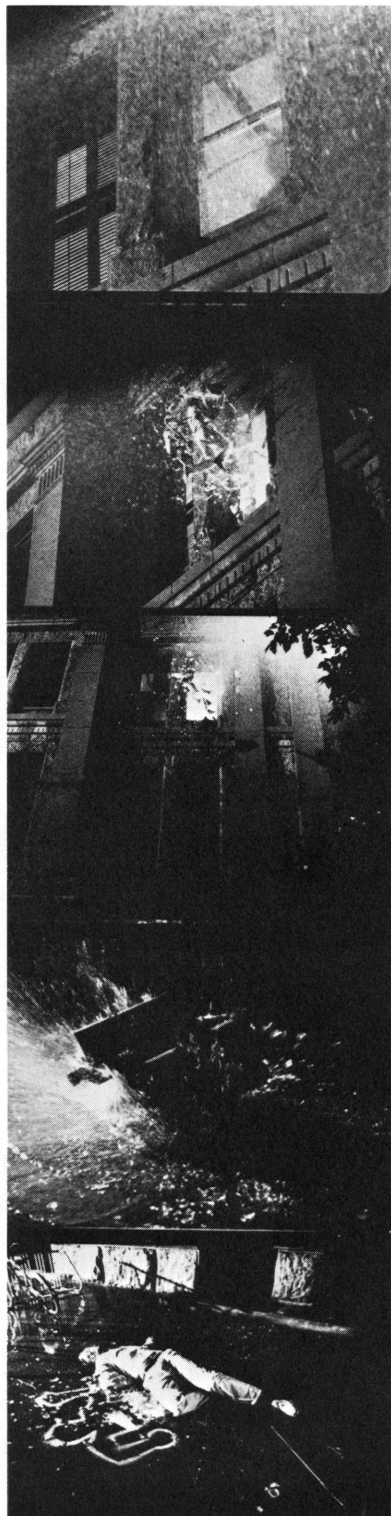
There was considerable testing as to the lighting and make-up for the leading players. "First we

did tests for Dennis, because in eight hours he has to change his appearance from that of a young, healthy professor to that of a dying man," Neyman pointed out. "In the beginning we tried to use bounce light and towards the end we tried to make a more dramatic, high contrast look. Diffusion was out of the question.

"With Meg Ryan it was different, because we found that soft lights would be best for her. So we had one character who changes while the rest of the cast does not, so we had to keep careful continuity as to what part of the story, what degree of his dying, we were shooting. When they were together we used a lot of stands and flags so we could have harshly lit Dennis in one part of the frame and softly lit Meg in another. She's a nice actress to work with and she has a wonderful face, so it was a pleasure to keep a consistent soft lighting on her to show her youth."

One of the visual feats of *D.O.A.* is the way the black and white sequences at the opening and close blend imperceptibly into and out of the color footage. "We made quite a few tests in the beginning because we wanted the black and white to have the same look as the color so we could make the transitions invisible," Neyman explained. "We used real black and white stock because I believe it is physically impossible to use color for black and white because the color mask brings the density range down to the minimum. Then we'd have a gray and white image. Theoretically, a quality black and white can be made from color negative, but it's inconvenient and it just doesn't make sense.

"We used Kodak XX for black and white and 5247 and 5294 for the color. For 75% of the picture we used 94, which is a remarkable stock. Outdoors we used 47, which I found a little contrasty compared to 94; sometimes it's too harsh. For the XX we had regular black and white processing, but we printed all our dailies on color print stock because in the release print it would be on color stock. Black and white print stock has more latitude, so we



Night and rain add dramatic emphasis to the death fall of the villain, as illustrated by these frames from the movie.

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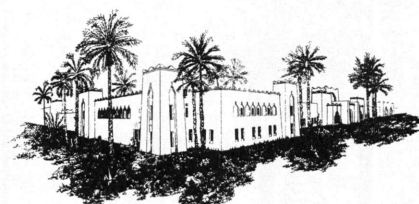
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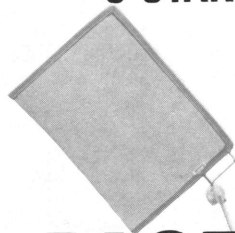
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asked DuArt to make all the tests and dailies on color stock, just to see what we were actually going to have in the final print. I was very pleased with the work of both the labs we used, DuArt and CFI."

Scenes made at the horse farm were shot under heavy pressure because of a gathering rainstorm and expected flood conditions. "Our producer informed us every few minutes that we must rush because soon the river would be over its banks and we would be unable to get back to Austin," Neyman recalled. "There was a lot of tension, because we had to light the scene and finish it fast – and it involved horses and a firearm stunt.

"Sometimes the rain would play funny games with us. The tar pit location was about a 40 minute drive from Austin. One of the producers stayed in Austin, where it was a beautiful, sunny day. When we got to the location we encountered a tremendous thunderstorm which wasn't going to go away. We decided to go back to the interior set, but the producer didn't believe us when we called.

"In every picture there is at least one location that never goes easy," Neyman stated. "The tar pit was definitely the most challenging, because it involved a night scene, a stunt, and a car chase. We knew from the beginning that it would be a difficult location, first of all because it was a big area, it was black, and we couldn't use a lot of lights. We used our moonlight and we had lights all over the bridge. I squeezed a couple more lights from production on the condition that as soon as we used them we would send them back. And the tar was shiny, so it reflected a lot. We decided to consolidate locations, so we dug the pit close to the carnival scene, which helped us a lot visually. We put some lights together and put them very high. They created the impression of one source."

Car interior shots for the nocturnal chase sequence were improvised in a garage near the tar pit location. Neyman described it as "Poor man's process – just a two man operation with a real car.

Shake the car and move some small bulbs from flashlights like streetlights." Four cameras were used for the scene wherein the car crashes into the tar pit. "We knew we wouldn't have a second chance, so we shot it from all possible angles with different lenses and camera speeds.

"We did the same on the stunt jumps from windows. On one leap we could have only one take because the stunt man checked it out and said it was too dangerous to do twice. So we put three cameras on it from different angles and it was difficult to light from all angles. Some of the stunts we shot at normal speed were later slowed down optically for reasons of style."

The other large scale scene was the final confrontation, which was similarly difficult and, unfortunately, is not in the final cut. "It was at the giant Ferris wheel in Dallas and it was supposed to be shot in the rain all in one day," Neyman recalled. "It was sunny, and the shot was so wide that no rain tower could cover it. We did it, eventually, and it was cut into the first version, but it didn't work for dramatic reasons so we shot a different ending in October."

Cinematographers in recent years have become involved increasingly in the post production of their films. Neyman not only oversaw the timing of *D.O.A.* but participated in the optical work. "I planned to be there only a few days, but I stayed much longer because there were a lot of things to be done. There were a lot of opticals and some things had to be done over just to match other images. It was the beginning of January and I wasn't busy, so I worked at the optical house to make the opticals part of the film – not something grainy like a second unit shot, just part of the film. We had very high requirements for quality.

"CRC did the opticals. They were very cooperative and they really put a lot of energy and time into their work. We spent a lot of time together on the last sequence when color blends to black and white, how to do it organically and invisibly." △



In the prologue, Bigelow (Edmond O'Brien) tells detectives (Roy Engle and George Lynn) that he has been murdered.

'I Want To Report a Murder'

by George Turner

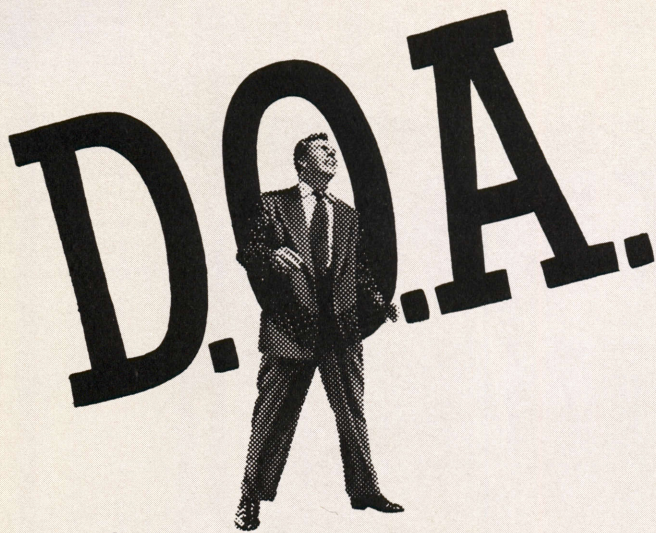
A man hurries unsteadily along a dark Los Angeles street, enters a police station and stalks through the winding corridors until at last he enters a door marked HOMICIDE DIVISION.

"I want to report a murder," he tells the several detectives calmly. They ask questions: *Where did it happen?* "San Francisco, last night." *Who was murdered?* "I was."

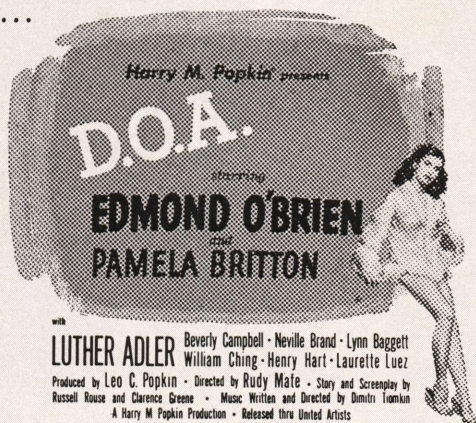
So begins a memorable film from almost four decades ago, *D.O.A.* (Dead on Arrival). Certainly this is one of the more unusual and dramatic establishing sequences yet devised, worthy to rank with the arrival scene at Fort Zinderneuf in *Beau Geste*, the dream visit to Manderley in *Rebecca*, the escape from the posse in *Of Mice and Men*, Charles Foster Kane's muttered "Rosebud," or close-ups of the fishing nets in *The*

Pearl. Once we have seen and heard a haggard Edmond O'Brien deliver those few lines in an emotion-drained voice that leaves no room for doubt, we're hooked for the additional 80 minutes necessary to watch him untangle a complex yarn of cold-blooded murder and a frantic race against the clock for understanding and revenge.

In Germany, in 1931, Robert Siodmak directed an obscure picture called *Der Mann, Der Seinen Morder Sucht* (*The Man Who Seeks His Murderer*), in which a dying man tries to learn who is responsible for his impending doom. This basic idea inspired independent producer Harry Popkin to make *D.O.A.* A theater chain operator and sporting events promoter, Popkin had entered production about nine years earlier with a series of low-budget pictures featuring all-black casts



...the strangest entry ever made on a police blotter...
the story of a man who sets out to avenge
his own murder...



Ernest Laszlo, ASC



for release to specialized theaters. His first mainstream production was the successful *And Then There Were None* (1945), directed by René Clair and released by Twentieth Century-Fox. In 1949, after several years of providing financial backing for other independent producers, Popkin formed Cardinal Pictures, Inc., specifi-

cally to make features for United Artists release. The fourth of these, falling between *The Big Wheel* and *Champaigne For Caesar*, was *D.O.A.*, which was completed in November 1949 but not released until the following April 30. The unusual theme of the picture and the excellence of its acting and presentation won it popular and critical acclaim despite its lack of boxoffice star names.

The dramatic visual qualities of the story were ensured by the selection of Rudolph Maté, ASC, as director, and Ernest Laszlo, ASC, as director of photography. It was to be Maté's third directorial job, following many years as a celebrated cinematographer.

The screenplay was a collaboration of two former New Yorkers, Clarence Green and Russell Rouse, who envisioned the experiences of an average man as he plunges into a nightmarish adventure in strange - but very real - places. Most of the action occurs in San Francisco and Los Angeles, both of which abound in authentic unreality. They were able to convince key members of the Los Angeles homicide and vice squads that their story would not be detrimental to the police force and were assigned the services of a special investigator to advise them in proper police procedures and suggest appropriate locations for staging chases and action concerning gangster activity.

Watching the daily papers during what proved to be an unusually rowdy period in Los Angeles history, they deliberately introduced into their narrative places where real incidents of violence were occurring. When some mobsters were shot up in a night spot on Sunset Boulevard, for example, the writers quickly worked the club facade and adjacent areas into the story. When it was learned that some Mafia kingpins had moved into Beverly Hills, they fashioned a sequence in which the hero confronts a murderess in a hilltop mansion in the same neighborhood.

To gain a better understanding of criminal investigation procedures and absorb some underworld ambience, the writers traveled as observers with various police detectives as they called on skid row bars, pawnshops and known criminal hangouts. They observed shakedowns, arrests, booking procedures and an ambush for a murder suspect who was wounded and captured. For a time they haunted the Main Street Skid Row district, then at its post-war worst.

San Francisco supplied some of the more "normal" settings, including the St. Francis Hotel, Market Street at a busy hour, hilly streets with straining cable cars, and the wharf area. It also provided the Fisherman Club, then a be-bop music joint, as a chaotic scene for murder.

It's a curious fact that some of the movies that utilize the American milieu most effectively are the work of filmmakers who come here from other lands and observe keenly many distinctive customs and places that we have long taken for granted. (As an example, the most authentic filmed depiction of the Texas farmer, *The Southerner*, was produced by the Hakim brothers from Egypt, directed by France's Jean Renoir and photographed by ex-Parisian Lucien An-

driot, ASC.) Such was the case with *D.O.A.*, which was directed by a cinematographer from Poland and photographed by a Hungarian emigre. Both men had lived in the United States for many years – Maté since 1934, Laszlo since the mid-1920s – but they never lost their sense of wonder at their adopted land. For *D.O.A.* they achieved studio-quality artistry although they worked almost entirely on practical locations outside the studio.

Maté was born in Krakow of a Hungarian father and a Czechoslovakian mother. He majored in philosophy at universities in Vienna, Budapest and Berlin, but enlisted in the army at 17 and fought in Italy and Serbia for 26 months. After recovering from war wounds and a long bout with typhoid, Maté worked as an assistant cameraman in Budapest and Vienna before becoming a full-fledged cinematographer. During the 1920s he photographed some of the greatest silent films in Austria, Germany and France, including *Samson and Delilah*, directed by Alexander Korda; *The Passion of Joan of Arc* and *Vampyr*, directed by Carl Theodor Dreyer; *Liliom*, directed by Fritz Lang; and *The Last Millionaire*, directed by René Clair. He came to the United States at the suggestion of the French watercolorist and director, Harry Lachman, for whom he had shot seven pictures in France and England and who was now working for Fox Film.

Maté's work in *Dante's Inferno*, his second picture for Fox, placed him in the front rank of American cinematographers. His distinctive touch was crucial to the success of the likes of *Dodsworth*, *Foreign Correspondent*, *That Hamilton Woman*, *Pride of the Yankees*, *Cover Girl* and *Gilda*. In 1948 he was made a producer at Columbia, and the following year he directed *The Dark Past*, a psychological drama featuring a marvelous dream sequence shown in negative with William Holden being pelted by black rain.

Laszlo became an assistant cameraman in 1926 and got his first screen credit in 1944 as director of photography of Paramount's *The Hitler Gang*, which he shot in a *noir* fashion that won him immediate recognition as a pictorial stylist. His pre-*D.O.A.* work included *Two Years Before the Mast*, *The Road to Rio*, *Manhandled* and *Impact*. After *D.O.A.* he photographed two controversial pictures, *M* (in which he carried his artistic handling of practical settings a step farther) and *The Moon is Blue*; was awarded an Oscar for *Ship of Fools*, and received Academy nominations for *Inherit the Wind*, *Judgment at Nuremberg*; *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*; *Star!*, *Airport* and *Logan's Run*.

Laszlo, handsome and debonair, a man of the world with European manners, was in love with the American dream. "Every young American should know my story," he told this writer several years ago. "If a fellow like me can come to this country and see all his dreams come true, so can anybody who really tries."

In the post-World War II years a tradition of realistic American crime pictures based upon actual police cases and photographed in authentic locales had been established: *Boomerang*, *Kiss of Death* (both 1947),



Above: Sam (Jeff Kirkpatrick) doesn't resent Bigelow's attentions to Sue (Cay Forcester)— yet. Left: Rudolph Maté, ASC.

He Walked By Night and *Naked City* (both 1948) are prime examples. *D.O.A.* was photographed under similar circumstances, but instead of striving for an atmosphere of semi-documentary realism, Maté and Laszlo blended actuality into the more fanciful style demanded by a strange mystery story.

Except for the framing scenes at homicide, the picture is a long flashback with minimal narration by O'Brien. Frank Bigelow (O'Brien), an overworked tax accountant in the desert town of Banning, takes a short vacation from his office and his secretary-fiancee, Paula (Pamela Britton). At the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco, he falls in with a happy crowd of conventioners and their wives, accompanying them to a bebop joint, the Fisherman. While he arranges an assignation with a beautiful blonde at the bar, someone switches drinks with Bigelow. He finds that the drink tastes strange so he orders a replacement. Next day he feels ill and goes to a hospital for an examination. He is

Above: Luther Adler as Majak.
Below: Edmond O'Brien as Frank Bigelow.



informed that he has been poisoned by an iridium substance which already has entered his system, and that he will die within a few days. He hastens to another clinic where he is told, "I don't think you fully understand, Bigelow. You've been murdered."

Before he can be placed in a hospital, Bigelow flees in a panic, racing through busy downtown streets. At last he stops running and grimly determines to find out why he was murdered and by whom. Learning that a Los Angeles client, Philips, was trying desperately to get in touch with him, followed by news

that Philips has committed suicide, Bigelow flies to Los Angeles, where he interviews Phillips' brother, Frank (Henry Hart), the beautiful widow (Lynn Baggett), his chief accountant, Halliday (William Ching), and his secretary (Beverly Campbell). Bigelow's office records furnish a solid clue: he had once notarized a bill of sale for Philips, countersigned by one George Reynolds, regarding a valuable shipment of iridium. He learns that the mineral was obtained illegally by Reynolds without Philips' knowledge.

His search for Reynolds leads Bigelow to a confrontation with Majak (Luther Adler), an underworld big shot, and his deadly henchmen led by the insane and sadistic Chester (Neville Brand). Majak assures him that he had nothing to do with the poisoning, but that now he must have Bigelow killed for learning too much. Bigelow is taken for a ride, but escapes into downtown traffic, where he is hotly pursued by Chester. Cornered in a drug store, Bigelow is saved when Chester is gunned down by police. Bigelow flees – he hasn't time to get involved in a police investigation.

Bigelow finds that Reynolds also has been murdered, and that Philips was killed by Mrs. Philips and Halliday, who made it appear he had committed suicide because of his supposed involvement in the illegal iridium deal. In innocently notarizing the bill of sale, Bigelow became the one person who could prove Philips was not a part of the iridium deal and cause suspicion to fall upon the guilty lovers. They poisoned him, thinking he knew everything. Carrying a handgun he acquired during his altercations with the gangsters, Bigelow corners Halliday in his office building and, in a gun duel, kills him.

At homicide, Bigelow concludes his story: "All I did was notarize one little paper – one little paper out of hundreds." Then he dies and is booked as "dead on arrival."

There is good acting throughout, and one virtuoso performance where it counts most – that of Edmond O'Brien, who is on screen continuously. He begins as a naive, all too human small townerner out for a fling in the big city before he settles down to married life. He is perfectly convincing as he is being dazzled by all the flashy women at the hotel (a wolf whistle on the sound track each time he gets an eyeful is a bit too cute for the situation), drinks too much, gets a bit too flirtatious with the wife of one of the conventioners, and makes a date with a gorgeous barfly at the Fisherman. Thereafter he passes realistically through a gamut of emotions: terror when he learns that he is about to die, disbelief as he stands on a busy street and becomes acutely aware of the sweetness of the life that pulses around him, anger, obsession, suffering at the hands of a brutal gang, and a weary triumph at achieving the only goal left to him – the solving and avenging of his own murder. It's difficult to imagine another actor seeing it through so perfectly.

The second showiest part is Brand's crazed Chester, who is described by Adler (with evident affection) as, "...An unfortunate boy...unhappy unless



Doctor (Frank Gerstle) shows Bigelow the glowing poison that permeates his body.

he causes pain. He likes to see blood." A highly decorated war veteran making his film debut after appearing in plays in New York, Brand overplays the role with much leering and eye-rolling, but this works well in the context of the character's insanity. Adler, a Broadway star only recently lured to Hollywood, also stands out as the underworld chief with urbane manners and an utter disregard for human life.

The photographic treatment is cohesive, true throughout to the changing moods of the story. The framing story is in what is now called *film noir* style (although the term hadn't been coined at that time) with harsh lighting contrasts and menacing shadows. The early scenes of the story proper, those in Banning and at the St. Francis, are deceptively ordinary, having been played lightly and photographed in the plain, eye-level, evenly lighted style commonly applied to romantic comedies. When Bigelow signs the hotel register, the signatures of Ernest Laszlo and Russell Rouse can be seen.

The atmosphere changes abruptly at the Fisherman, where "Jadie" Carson and his band (whose well-played be-bop music is akin to that of the better-known Dizzy Gillespie) perform fast, exciting jazz as O'Brien and the conventioners become increasingly uninhibited. Scenes of the customers responding frenziedly to the intoxicating rhythms are intercut with extreme close-ups of sweating black musicians caught up in the intensity of their music-making. Grotesque shadows, flashing lights seen through a haze of smoke, and angular shots of lustful men and sensual women create a sense of chaos and impending danger. Incidentally, *D.O.A.* apparently was the first film to depict a be-bop session.

The flat, gray look of early morning in the wharf area is captured admirably in subsequent scenes. Later, when Bigelow learns that he is dying, he

runs in terror through the city, eventually reaching the heart of Market Street during a busy hour. For a few poignant moments he stands in the brightness of day, next to a newstand where a display of *Life* magazines forms an arc over his head, trying to comprehend that he is no longer a part of the vibrant life that surrounds him. He stares, open mouthed, at a little girl playing with a ball, and – as a few bars of a Viennese waltz swirl through his mind – a pair of happy lovers.

Thereafter, the photography is calculated to mirror both the nightmare world into which the hero has plunged and the torment in his mind as his fear of death itself is replaced with the fear that he will have to die without knowing why and by whose hand, and that he will be denied his right to even the score. A knowing camera searches the byways of Los Angeles, from Skid Row to lofty mansions, peering closely into the faces of well-dressed businessmen whose outward respectability hides corruption, glamorous women with murder in their hearts, hoodlums with expressionless eyes, a cultured European underworld czar who assigns killings casually while ordering cocktails and dallying with his mistress, and a childish brute who relishes torture and murder. It's a rogue's gallery worth studying.

For an early morning skid row sequence, Maté arranged for the street cleaning department to bypass the area, leaving it "unspoiled" for the camera at five a.m. Much of the picture was photographed night for night, which was a much different thing then than now, because the available film stocks were comparatively slow. Utilization of ambient light is minimal, most of the sources being as carefully controlled as if they had been set up on a stage. These scenes are dominated by menacing, opaque shadows and unusual camera placements, augmented by optical dissolves and laps, eccentric cutting and weird musical stings.

Bigelow slugs the tormenting Chester (Neville Brand) as Maria (Laurette Luez), Majak and Dave (Michael Ross) watch coldly.



The Dmitri Tiomkin score, composed in a Russian-romantic vein, is a mixed blessing. Built upon an attractive love theme which is developed through some heavily dramatic and deliberately abrasive variations, the music is very effective at times, but in several instances it becomes intrusively over-literal.

The most striking interior scenes are of the climactic meeting of the victim and his murderer in the Bradbury Building, a masterpiece of distinctive 19th Century architecture in downtown Los Angeles. The open five-story interior, with its wealth of cast iron tracteries on balconies and open hydraulic elevators, is a perfect setting to showcase Laszlo's penchant for mysterious lighting effects. Here the shadows seem edged with lace, which adds a particularly sinister quality as they play over the two men engaged in a game of death. About one year later, Laszlo photographed an equally dramatic and much longer sequence for *M* in the same building.

D.O.A. proved to be popular with audiences, notwithstanding its downbeat premise of a hero doomed from the beginning – seemingly boxoffice poison in a mass entertainment whose public habitually demanded happy endings. The satisfaction of watching an underdog getting even probably accounts for this and even overrides the monstrous underlying joke that the murder was an unnecessary error, the disturbing concept that the underworld lies alarmingly close to the surface of the everyday world, and the constant reminder that the hand of fate hovers over us

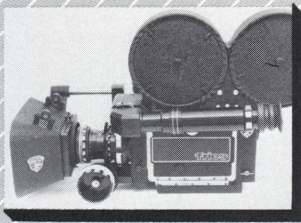
all. Its creators doubtless were aware of something William Shakespeare often traded upon: that revenge, in real life the most tawdry of motives and almost invariably a disappointment in fulfillment, can be devilishly satisfying in a work of fiction.

D. O. A.

A Cardinal Pictures, Inc., production; a United Artists release; executive producer, Harry M. Popkin; directed by Rudolph Mate, ASC; music written and directed by Dimitri Tiomkin; screen play by Russell Rouse and Clarence Green; producer, Leo C. Popkin; associate producer, Joseph H. Nadel; director of photography, Ernest Laszlo, ASC; art director, Duncan Cramer; film editor, Arthur H. Nadel; set decorations, Al Orenbach; assistant director, Marty Moss; costumes by Maria Donovan; makeup by Irving Berns; sound recording, Ben Winkler, Mac Dalgleish; operative cameraman, Gene Hirsch; assistant cameraman, Jack Fuqua; script supervisor, Arnold Laven; key grip, Carl Gibson; gaffer, Jim Potevin; still photographer, Frank Tanner; technical advisor, Edward F. Dunne, MD; RCA recording system. Running time, 83 minutes. Released April 30, 1950.

Frank Bigelow, Edmond O'Brien; Paula Gibson, Pamela Britton; Majak, Luther Adler; Miss Foster, Beverly Campbell (later Garland); Chester, Neville Brand; Halliday, William Ching; Mrs. Phillips, Lynn Baggett; Stanley Phillips, Henry Hart; Maria Rakubian, Laurette Luez; Sam Haskell, Jess Kirkpatrick; Sue, Cay Forester; Dr. Matson, Frank Jacquet; Dr. Schaefer, Larry Dobkin; Dr. MacDonald, Frank Gerstle; Kitty, Carol Hughes; Dave, Michael Ross; Nurse, Donna Sanborn; Jeanie, Virginia Lee; Captain of Police, Roy Engle; Detective, George Lynn; Waiter, Frank Conlin; Desk Clerk, Bill Baldwin; Jane Carlisle, Lynn Roberts; Eddie, William Forrest; Bartender, Peter Leeds; Photographer, Ivan Triesault; Angelo, Philip Pine; Hood, George Guhl; Little Man, Frank Cady; Cop, Eddie Chandler; Bell Hop, Jerry Paris; Bandleader, "Jadie" Carson.

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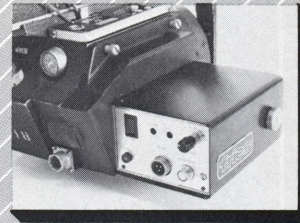
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Coming to America

—a Lavish Comedy

by Nora Lee

Produced by Robert D. Wachs and George Folsey, Jr.
Directed by John Landis
Woody Omens, ASC, director of photography

"I often have this feeling of *deja vu* when I am lighting a shot. I've seen this shot in some other movie. That feeling was strong on this *Coming to America*," says Woody Omens, ASC. For director of photography Omens, Eddie Murphy's new fairytale romance was an opportunity to pay homage to the great glamour cameramen of the past and to devel-

op his own sensitivity to natural lighting.

In the story Murphy plays Crown Prince Akeem of the mythical country of Zamunda. He comes to New York with his friend and advisor Semmi (Arsenio Hall) to find a bride. There he meets the beautiful and independent-minded Lisa (Shari Headley) and, yes, they

do live happily ever after, but not without a few trials and tribulations along the way.

Akeem's tribulations were shared by Omens. For both men, time was of the essence. "This has to be one of the all-time record-breaking films in terms of last day of shooting to first day of presentation. We finished shooting on May

2 and we opened on June 29. We are talking about six weeks of post production and 83 days of shooting. We had to be editing and locking picture long before May 3. I believe two reels were actually locked before we finished shooting."

But before shooting could even begin there were a number of questions to be addressed. What style do you give to a contemporary romantic comedy? What does a modern fairytale with an all-black cast look like? In Omens' mind, the key word was "glamorous," and the style is reminiscent of the romantic comedies of the 40s and 50s.

Omens recalled that director John Landis wasn't terribly specific about what style he was looking for, but he knew precisely what he didn't want. "John and I really didn't talk that much about photographic style except that he likes simplicity. He doesn't like a lot of filtration. He doesn't like to see flares or halos around lights. He likes an unfettered, clean look. This movie turns out to be the cleanest I've ever done – with the least amount of filtration.

"For a while I was uneasy about this because I'm a pretty faithful filter user. I had to work with the idea and re-adjust my thinking. I had to recognize that without some softening of edges with filters, I had to somehow come back and smooth things out with the lighting."

Omens took a lot of care in developing a lighting scheme for this picture. "I jokingly said the other day that I don't think I know how to photograph white people now. I was being facetious, but the point is we did a lot of testing before the picture began. I had the principal actors all together for a day. I had photographed black people many times in my career, but never so many for such a long period of time. And the complexion range was enormous! They ranged from Shari Headley, who is very fair, to John Amos, who is dark black," he explained.

"We made a decision from the testing that in a situation where we have, say, a two-shot of Eddie and Shari, it wasn't necessarily



smart to try to equalize them out. That would be violating the basic reality that there is a difference in color. So why would you want to lighten him to balance to her? If we bring Eddie up, it makes his skin milky. It's not Eddie. It's not his true complexion. We found that it was easier to take Shari down a small amount, but not too far. We didn't want to give her a suntan," grinned Omens.

"There is one scene in Madison Square Garden where I have most of the actors together and there's a total complexion range. That was the single toughest shot to light. They are all lined up in one row and the comparison is obvious. There I did have to use variable netting to balance them out. Otherwise I would have had underexposure and overexposure.

"I did pour a little more light on the darker complexioned people and a little less light on the lighter ones. This is all very subtle. I did not make changes in the color of the light, only in the intensity of light. Once a single source was established, I broke it up with nets so that I could tone down the people who needed it, and then I added one lamp to bring more intensity to the actor on the end.



"Here's the catch," said Omens. "It isn't a question of falling back on how to keylight the darkest black person in the scene and then just netting down the lighter person. There is something more significant in the approach to lighting black skin. It is important to look for the reflectance planes or angles of the skin – the contours of the face – so that you get the proper amount of sheen.

"Now, it was traditional in movies of the past that black people were oiled up so they would glisten and not be lost in shadow. Well, that's passé now because it is just an

Opposite page:
Louma crane used here for high angle shot of dance number. Above: Close-up of dancers. Below: Landis and Omens confer.

Top: Murphy and Headley go for a walk. Center: The two stroll streets of New York as camera, lights, and dolly track their movement. Below: Madison Square Gardens proved to be the most challenging lighting job for Omens.



unflattering greasy look. There are other ways.

"I'm not the originator of the soft sheen technique," admitted Omens. "Some of it was done in *A Soldier's Story* and a great deal of it was done in *The Color Purple*. We look for light from a ceiling, from a wall, from a white card or from a color tinted card to reflect into the skin. It isn't so much for exposure as it is to get to the mirror sheen, and then you get the most exquisite kind of skin.

"Black skin, when lit well, is probably the most sensual skin you can light. There is this glow within the depths of the dark skin that comes out. I don't know if that's clear, but the point is that on the testing day, I searched for how to get that glow. I found it and I used it throughout the movie."

If there is one area of cinematography that continually excites Omens, it is the art of the close-up. "I live to light a close-up. And I am very pleased with how rich and interesting the close-ups are for every member of the cast. It's a matter of finding the key light that works for each actor. Each one needs a key that is positioned at the right height and right angle for them. Each one tends to need individual focal length treatments. Some actors look better at 100mm; others are better at 75mm. Some can take it all. Eddie is magical. He can take it all."

Omens' sensitivity to light and its effects on an actor's face may come from an earlier obsession. "I was a painter first. I got interested in photography because I wanted to photograph my paintings," he explains. From still photography he graduated to filmmaking and eventually received a masters degree in film from the University of Southern California. His first lessons in how to light a scene came not from college instructors but from masters of light such as French impressionist Claude Monet and the 16th-Century Italian founder of the naturalistic school, Caravaggio.

"I grew up with Monet's work as a junior scholar at the Art Institute in Chicago. For me the most significant of his pictures, with respect to light, was 'The Hay-

stacks'. He painted them only during certain times of the day. He would set up – let's say four canvases at once, I'm not sure of the exact number – and work on them at precisely the same time of day each day. He captured the nuances of light – not only intensity and angle, but color and color temperature – as it changed.

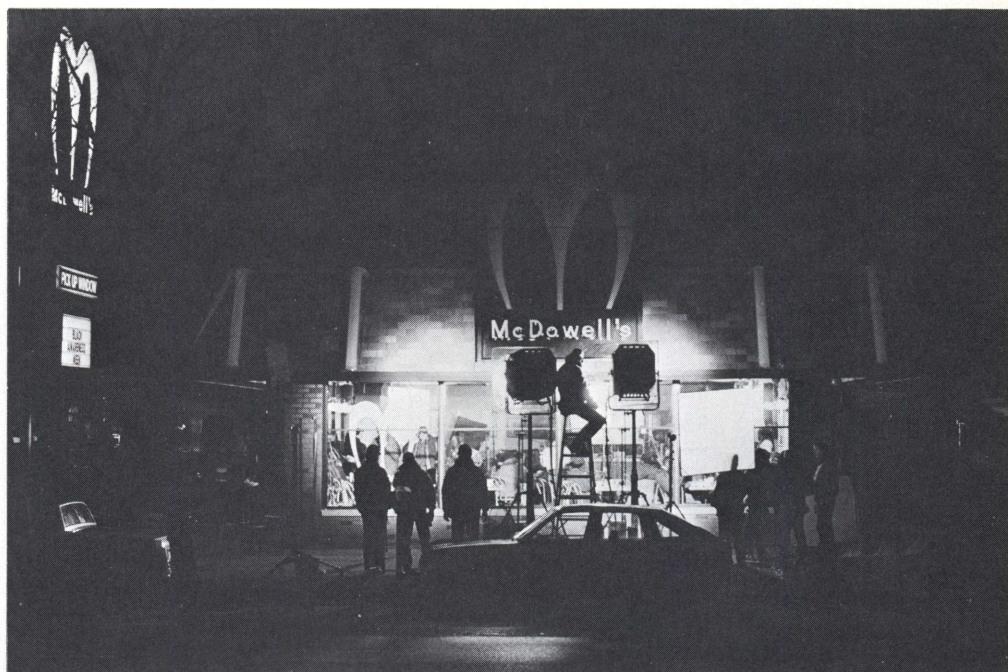
"Caravaggio was the other influence. He 'lit' his paintings with a strong key light. He was the master of chiaroscuro – a term that gets bandied about a lot, and literally means light and dark. It is what cinematography is all about – modelling and form and the management of light and dark to build contours and drama," said Omens.

Naturalism is a term that comes up often in discussions of modern cinematography. Omens used the term to explain the way the scenes in *Coming to America* were lit. "A definition of naturalism comes from the respect paid to light sources. If there are windows in a set, we play them for what they do. If there are practical lamps we play them for what they do. If actors walk in and out of different sources or in and out of shadow, then that's what you see."

Much of *Coming to America* was done on stages at Paramount. Omens counted at least seven different stages and naturalistic lighting was the goal on every one. "When I went into this, I knew it was a panic," recalls Omens. "While we were in New York shooting exteriors and some minimal interiors, they were prepping and building the sets at Paramount for the enormous palace in Zamunda and the equally enormous set of Akeem's bedroom, bath and dressing room."

As a result, Omens discovered a new cure for jet lag. On one occasion after shooting in New York for the week, he took a Friday night flight back to Los Angeles to check the sets with director Landis. He was back in New York in time for his Monday morning call. The trip was so fast that "I never got jet lag. It was as if it never happened," laughed Omens.

The bi-coastal operation



Night shot of Wendy's restaurant converted into McDowell's with brown tinted windows removed.

meant that Omens had to rely on the talents of his gaffer Norm Glasser to pre-rig the stage sets while Omens and the rest of the crew were still shooting in New York. He explained some of the difficulties: "Akeem's bedroom and bathing area have windows and mirrors all around. So no matter where we went we ran the risk of seeing ourselves. All the mirrors were gimbaled so they would tip up and down or turn left and right. We couldn't do a compound move – just one or the other.

"We did a crane move, too, in this room of mirrors. With the help of Phil Caplan, who is an excellent operator, we were able to position the camera in such a way that we were totally invisible – even on moves."

The palace ballroom was definitely one instance of *deja vu*. Omens found himself thinking about the mirrored ballroom scene in *The Magnificent Ambersons*. Director of photography Stanley Cortez, ASC gimbaled those mirrors in much the same way. As the camera approached, each mirror was turned slightly to avoid telltale reflections.

The ballroom didn't have a totally closed ceiling, but it was vaulted in a way that still provided Omens with a top source. Chicken

coops were hung the length of the top opening. There was also a 30-foot high side section that ran the length of the room on both sides near the top of the walls. Omens placed lights in the notches and the over all effect was soft, top lighting. The wedding takes place in the ballroom, and part of the celebration is a huge dance number.

"In the ballroom we used a Louma crane, a Panaglide and five other cameras. The crane was used for elevation and high angle down to ground level drop and the reverse. We used a wide-angle lens, a 21mm. With it we could take in the entire rush of African dancers that comes sweeping into the room and right up to the foreground. Typically with a dance number you want to show everything from head to toe. That sequence is quite spectacular."

It was important to Omens that he do everything possible to keep the sets from looking like sets. Part of his strategy included using hard ceilings. He explained, "All the sets we built were characterized by having roll back or hard ceilings – I will even include the ballroom – and I used those ceilings as reflectors. I could bounce light off them and pick up those special tones and reflectance planes in the actors' faces. Addi-

Top: Romantic lighting is most apparent in settings like this one for *Coming to America*. Below: Rain towers were called on for street scenes in New York where the bad weather was never bad enough.



tionally, I used white cards under people's faces to have another kind of skin enhancement."

There were several set pieces that had to cut directly with shots done on location in New York. To make the cuts as seamless as possible, Omens elected to use huge translights as part of the sets. While in New York he supervised the photography of the translights. "I requested that they be shot during certain times of the day, times that I thought would be generic and fit in with all our different weather and lighting conditions. They do integrate very well. Essentially, a translight is a transparency on a frosted backing. The backing diffuses the light so that it is illuminated evenly. You can get a very realistic duplication of the original scene. They can be very large. There was one that was conservatively 30 feet by 40 feet."

Seven stages at Paramount and a huge exterior set of the Zamundan Palace in Simi Valley, California, did not eliminate the need to shoot on location in New York. The film crew hit the streets in the early part of winter and New York threw every kind of weather at them – sunshine, overcast skies, drizzle, rain, freezing temperatures and the first big blizzard of the season – wreaking havoc with continuity.

The best example of Omens' fight with the weather occurs in front of the "McDowell's" restaurant – a fast food place where Akeem is employed. The scene was shot in falling snow. Said Omens, "We were all excited about finally getting some variety! We shot the master, a three shot, a two shot, and two singles. The last single we had to do was a single of John Amos. No snow. It stopped falling! We shot anyway and when it was edited they said, 'Who'll notice?... They'll notice....' So Bill Taylor created a matte that introduced falling snow both behind and in front of Amos. That shot is a different generation of film of necessity, but I hope that it's something that will not be detected in cuts from one shot to another."

Omens and crew spent



Exterior of palace set in Simi Valley. For the picture, a matte painting completed the palace and changed the background to Akeem's fantasy kingdom.

considerable time shooting rain sequences in New York. The most successful rain shots were done in front of the Waldorf Astoria at 3 o'clock in the morning with a 100-car gridlock. Subsequent nights were tougher. The temperature started to dip and the rain started turning to slush.

"Akeem is pursuing the woman he loves through a rain-storm and she escapes down a street," Omens related. "He is in a car searching for her. This particular night it was so cold that the city of New York wanted to prevent us from shooting. They felt it was too dangerous for the streets to have patches of casual ice. They told us there was a certain limit to how far we could go and we had to add antifreeze to the water. But it was still turning to slush. Finally, we couldn't finish the scene because it was too cold."

One day the weather almost completely shut down shooting. Omens suggested a way to recover part of the day, but he's still not confident that he did the right thing, at least from an artistic point

of view. "I suggested we take the scene in the taxi cab where Akeem and Semmi are on their way from the airport to the tenement. This scene had been partially shot on the Van Wyck expressway. So, I thought we could finish it up in a tent we built over the cab. I put tracing paper on the side windows of the cab; we lit it and flickered the light to make it look like the cab is passing through different places. In the back window I put a scrim so that you could see out, but you couldn't really tell what you were seeing.

"The camera was physically in the car mounted on apple boxes and the camera operator was in the passenger side looking back at Akeem and Semmi. It was an attempt to make an heroic save out of a lost day. Well, it was moderately successful. I am a little uncomfortable when it comes on the screen because you can't really see any depth outside," admitted Omens.

The McDowell's restaurant proved to be one of the most interesting challenges in New York. The crew took over a Wendy's res-

taurant for the duration and it was one of the few interiors Omens shot outside the studio. He explained, "It is virtually a fishbowl. Its three sides of open windows look out onto Queens. We could not have built that restaurant on a stage with that kind of believability – especially considering the change of light over a day. So, it was necessary to shoot it all in New York."

The further complication was that the windows were brown tinted glass. Omens' first comment was "We've got to remove this glass. There's no choice.

"Everyone looked at me like I was crazy. I went through every production person up to the producer. 'Was I sure it had to be removed? It would be very expensive.' It turned out we'd have to have special windows cut, because there wasn't any clear glass available in that size. Then I had neutral density plastic cut and ready to go because I needed density control without coloration. After it was all said and done everyone admitted it was the right decision.

"We wouldn't have been



Effort to save a bad New York weather day resulted in shooting in a tent in a snowstorm.

able to shoot outside at night looking in, because it would have cut down too much light. And when we were inside looking out we would have had discoloration – not only of the exterior scene, but lamps that were projected through the windows would have picked up the tint of the windows and projected that light on the actors and poisoned their skin – and that would have been irreparable in the lab.”

Another expensive decision that had to be made involved the use of the subway. “I was asked if I could shoot this sequence with a standing train and fake the movement? I told them that I didn’t think so. There were too many variables. You’ve got to have a traveling car. Besides, in New York there is a special track set aside for movies. The city provides the car of your choice, although we found it very difficult to get graffitied cars, because they don’t want that image projected of New York. But we needed them and eventually we got them.

“We had a scene where the lights go out on the subway – like they really do – and it was great. Even on subway walls where there is little to see, you still get some reflected light and that gives you a real sense of being in a subway.”

Several times Omens elected to use Panaglides. For example,

he used one in the ballroom and in the subway. “Operator Craig DiBona did a shot with the Panaglide moving through a crowded train. It is so smooth. We couldn’t do a dolly shot because the car is divided with poles and there were a lot of people. Only a human being carrying a camera could snake through there.”

Landis and Omens made the decision to use two Panavision cameras for most of the filming. Omens insists that lighting for two cameras isn’t that difficult, “as long as the rule I’ve established isn’t broken: No divergent cameras. What works best with two cameras is a wide master and a medium. What doesn’t work so well, even with side-by-side cameras, is the medium and the close-up. The close-up wants its own special lighting treatment and it wants to be more on axis with the actor’s eyes.”

When it came time to choose lenses, Omens let the look of the picture dictate. “The style of this picture was such that prime lenses were the way to do it. I’ve shot movies for years almost entirely with zoom lenses. I just feel that it may be time to go back to something more traditional in movies – the look we had before the zoom lens was invented.

“There is a certain consistency that comes with using specific prime lenses. Yes, you can use a variable prime lens or a zoom lens, but these new Primo lenses from Panavision boast of being the finest in the world right now. I just said, ‘Okay, let’s see what they can do.’ And the images are unbelievably crisp. They’re not only sharp, but they’re sharp everywhere – from corner to corner. So the combination of the fact that these lenses were available and the fact that I was going for this Forties style look worked out.

“The guys on the crew started getting into it. They would say, ‘Oh, you want a two inch lens or a three inch . . .’ It was traditional to call the lenses in inches in the earlier days of filmmaking. It was really good to think back about how it was done and to stay with

that feeling.” Once again a bit of *deja vu*.

Film stock is another important component of the film look and Omens tried a bit of everything Kodak has to offer. “Ninety per cent of the movie is shot with 5294. I used to divide up my shooting – 94 for interiors and 47 for exteriors. But from the beginning, I decided to shoot this movie with 94. I tended to overexpose the 94 about a half stop. It helps to see the shadows better and tends to reduce grain.

“There are a couple of exteriors that I did shoot in 47. There are some scenes that were shot with 5297 and there are some that were shot with 5295, as well. The one with 95 included a matte painting. We were talking to the matte people, Bill Taylor [ASC] and Sid Dutton, and they were going to do their part on 95. I thought it was appropriate that my part of the scene be on the same film.”

The exterior of the Zambundan Palace was created with a matte painting. Part of the palace exterior was built in Simi Valley, but matte artist Dutton added a new landscape and extended the top and sides of the existing structure. Omens had worked with Taylor and Dutton on *History of the World, Part I*.

For Omens, cinematography is an art, a means of expression. But it isn’t static. And change is what challenges and stretches Omens’ own talent. He concludes, “There is still something I want to achieve. Not only me – all cinematographers seem to be looking for ‘the look.’ To some it is style, but to others it is a sincere search to make light ultimately so expressive, so dazzling, so wonderful that it’s like magic. I like the word magic because it defines something you can’t always find. You can’t look for it; it escapes you and you chase it. Sometimes you do get it and you say, ‘That’s good.’ And that is the magic.” △

The author is a Los Angeles free lance writer and also works as a film production coordinator.

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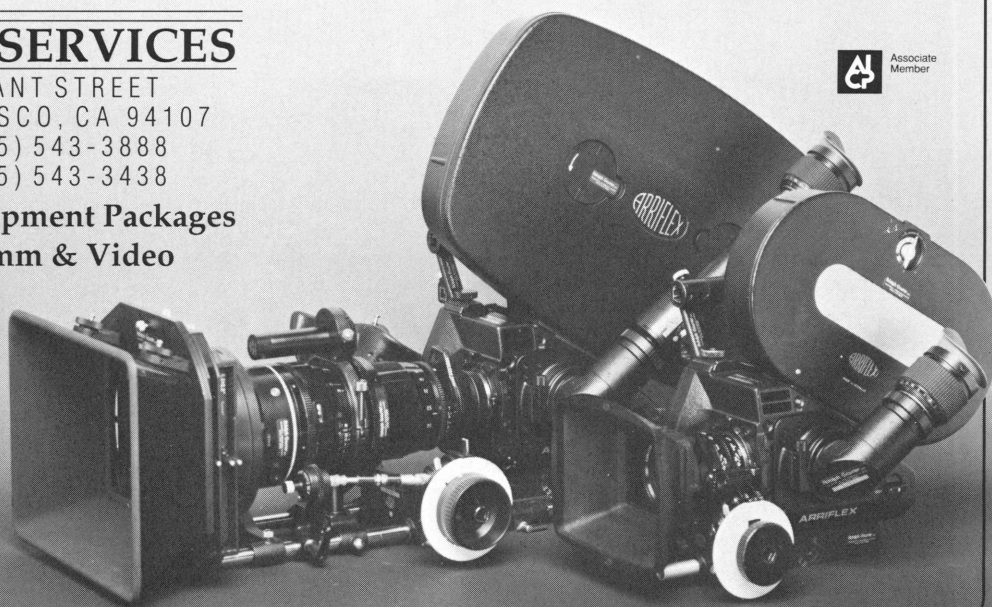
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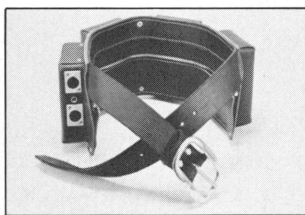
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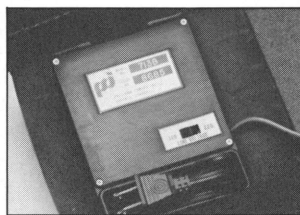
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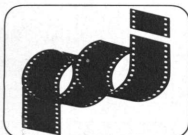
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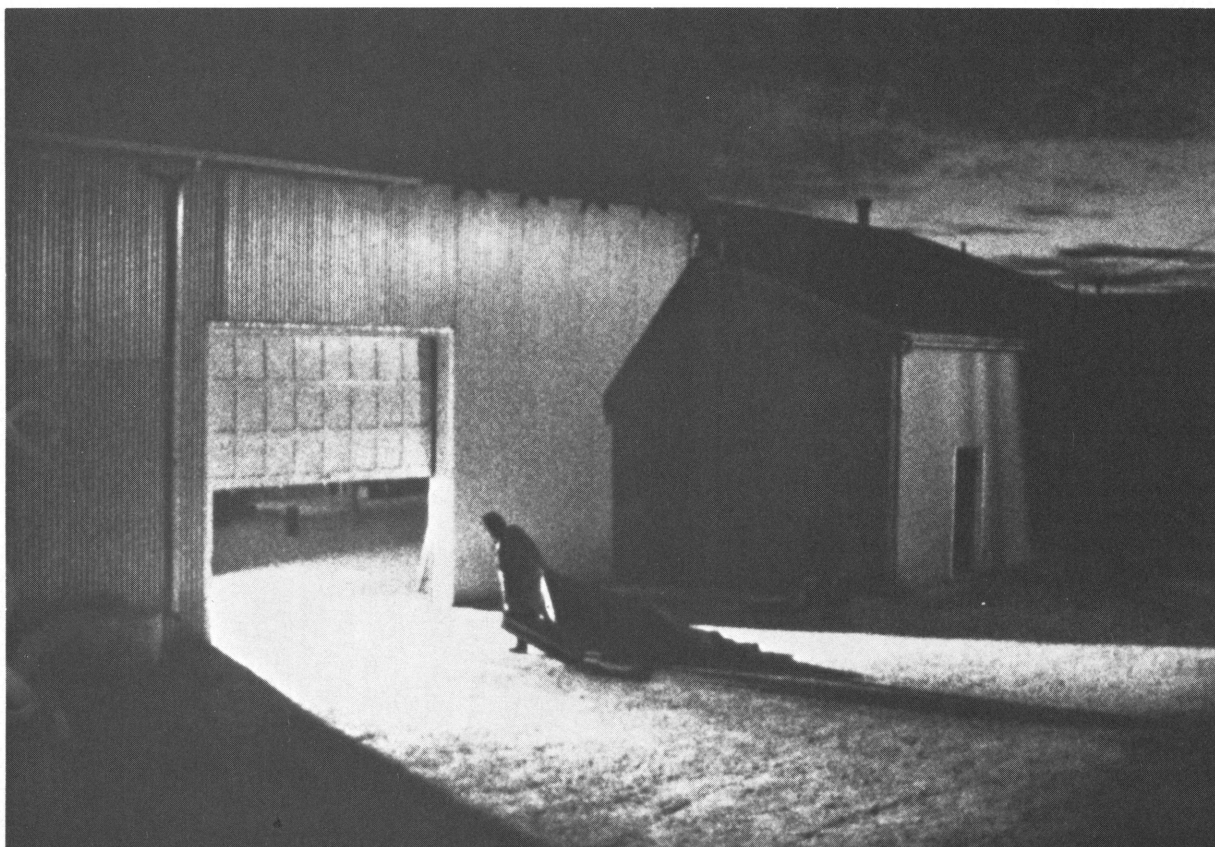
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Medium Straight—Super 16 to 35

by Spenser Nylan

Douglas E. Carnevale, director of photography for *Medium Straight* had filmed a number of music videos with Adam Friedman. (Their "Big Mouth (Whodini)" video was recently selected by the Museum of Modern Art for its permanent collection.) Even with considerable experience at fast multiple set-ups, shooting a feature length film in less than two weeks was a new challenge.

According to Friedman, "Doug, Blitz (Robert Litz) and I agreed that the only way to get this film in the can on a next to nothing

bankroll was to pull together a small, deeply committed group, made up of people we'd all worked with before: from actors, designers, and stylists to grips and PAs. A home team." Friedman added, "What we lost in size of crew, was more than made up for in expertise, enthusiasm, and lively collaboration. On a big crew, you just can't listen to everybody with an idea; on a small one, you can and do. Often."

Doubling and tripling up on jobs may have saved money and created a special *esprit*, but near the

frayed end of long days, set civilities and friendships ran the gauntlet. At one point, the key grip and executive producer were wrestling with flags being whipped by the wind, the gaffer – already in costume for a scene in which he was to play a supporting role – was receiving final touches from make-up, and the director of photography needed to bump up the lighting outside a window. Carnevale turned to Minietta (the gaffer/actor) and suggested that "If the 'actor' could find the time to fly a 5K, it would certainly be appreciated by the DP."

Glamour.

Photographed in *Super 16*, the film explores the consequences of a very small-time drug deal gone ludicrously awry. Nicky Harding (played by Jerome LePage), trying to impress his new girlfriend (Anne Lilly), meets with Joey Mannucci (Ron Sanborn). Both pretend to know what they're doing. Joey bungles his attempt to "take off" Nicky. In the struggle, Nick ends up with Joey's gun, thinking he's shot him dead.

Nick flees the scene, retreating to the family farm in South Jersey. He enlists the reluctant aid of his brotherly older cousin Pat (Richard Schiff). Pat eventually discovers that the man Nick shot is Joey Mannucci, the son of a prominent organized crime boss. He also finds out that Joey is not only *not* dead but eager to settle accounts.

The film explores how far Pat will go to help his ne'er-do-well younger cousin once he finds out that the possible solutions are not only illegal, but possibly fatal. The final confrontation between the cousins and Joey, backed up by a bodyguard (Pat Minietta, also the gaffer), takes place in the barn down on the farm. Built on this essentially action-oriented premise, with an urban story shifted to a rural setting, the film is in fact an extended study in the characters of five men and a woman. All are in their late twenties: non-yuppie characters from the yuppie generation.

Though written quickly and in pre-production instantly, the script of *Medium Straight* was polished over the course of a three-week rehearsal period. With the writer doubling as acting coach and the director-writer collaboration extremely close, scenes and sequences were reshaped with the cast for eventual filming on location. All this preparation paid off in high productivity and extremely low shooting ratios. In one day, for example, 18 pages were shot, on five locations, with 37 camera set-ups. Friedman gives a lot of credit for maintaining this pace to his first assistant director, Kim Watson, who managed "to keep us all in



Opposite page:
Nick Harding
(Jerome LePage)
takes matters into
his own hands.
Left: Medium
Straight crew
preps fire scene on
Salem, N.J. farm.
Below left: From
left to right, Ron
Sanborn (Joey),
LePage (Nicky), and
director Adam
Friedman.

overdrive without turning into a tyrant."

"Still," Watson concedes, "the pressure, building up over the long days, back to back, with egos kept under tight lids, sometimes exploded after hours." A heated discussion at 2 a.m. in a local restaurant over acting choices resulted in a visit by a state trooper who didn't share their passion for filmmaking. But, with fines paid, wrists still smarting from the slap, everyone was back on the set at nine for the start of another 15 hour day, with the local police car, needed for the first scene, idling outside the barn. Two days later, at the local motel, again in the wee hours, four state cars pulled into

the lot. Disturbing the peace? No. On their way back from another disturbance call, the officers stopped to ask how the film was going.

"I barely had time to think," said Carnevale. "And when I did, I faced the ultimate nightmare – waiting a week for the first negative report and over two weeks 'til I saw a daily." Carnevale used an Aaton LTR with a matched set of Zeiss super speed lenses and a 135mm Optex Canon f2 which proved exceptionally useful in capturing the beauty of late fall. In open country, it was possible to place the actors 110-150 yards from the camera. Of course, this also meant that action and focus marks

became hypercritical. Six inches off the mark and a new take was required. "Even though it takes longer to set marks with longer lenses, the result was well worth it."

Shooting in Super-16 for eventual blow-up to 35 meant that little or no diffusion was preferable in order to avoid pronounced grain in the enlarged negative. As a practice, Carnevale overexposed the negative a third to half a stop, across the board, to avoid the lab's having to pull the image out of the negative, and to provide an extra margin of control in the timing. Using Kodak high speed 7292 stock, Carnevale found that "lighting a little hotter than normal and stopping down to T2.8 or T4 avoided pushing the lens and the stock to their limit and gave the best results." Kodak 7291 was used for all daytime exteriors.

In order to keep to budget and shooting schedules, and still give the actors a chance to find their playing "heat," some of the dramatic scenes were shot in long continuous takes, some up to five minutes. By skillfully blocking the

actors and choreographing the movements of camera, sound and actors, it was possible to move smoothly from medium-close single shots to two and three shots without breaking the action. To keep these scenes from becoming too static, they were also designed as moving shots. Wanting to "help the cause," David Sharples made himself and his Steadicam equipment available for one day. But on other days, the only expedient way to shoot these scenes was to go handheld. In hindsight, the handheld shots, proved to be some of the film's more exciting footage. The 12-pound Aaton, ergonomically designed for hand-held work, made it possible for Carnevale to react quickly to slight but spontaneous shifts in action movements, creating an instinctive, almost intuitive play between actors and camera.

Altogether, the hand-held camera was used in eight different situations. Most risky were those scenes which Friedman knew would eventually be cut together in the edit. Matching cuts on different hand-held takes, each favoring a

different character could have been disastrous, but one of the film's smoothest cuts was possible when the camera rushed the action, lunging in over the shoulder on a blow to another character. Yet Friedman hastens to add, "With another eight weeks, a Louma crane, a thousand feet of speed rail, and a couple ten million yen, I might be saying something entirely different. I doubt it, but, you've got to make the best film you can with what you've got. And we did."

Coming out of the hyper-energetic medium of the music video where cutting typically comes hard, fast, and frenetic, it was surprising that Friedman occasionally went with long takes, sometimes even locking off the camera for certain scenes. Friedman seems particularly confident about the long takes. "A few of these longer, 'talky' scenes, seemed, on first glance, to beg for close-ups and cutting. But I found that if what the characters were saying was worth listening to, and the composition worth looking at, hanging in there for an extended medium two-shot

Day In

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with a locked camera, was more compelling than if I'd given in to the T.V.-impulse of shuttlecocking close-ups."

Winter (December) light even on the clearest of days, comes late and leaves early. It was easy to get caught short by a sun setting dangerously fast by 3:30 in the afternoon or still recalcitrantly hugging the horizon at 8:30 in the morning. On the other hand, the low angle winter light was fairly constant from about 9 a.m. to about 2 p.m., freeing the crew from major continuity problems. Yet no matter how much preparation and planning went into each day's shoot, rarely a day passed when the team didn't have to scramble.

Faced with fallen light, a borrowed car which had to be returned to its owners, an actor who needed to get back to the city that night, it looked like an important scene would have to be lost. Or replaced. Fast. The writer reworked the scene, placing it in a room of the same motel in which the company was being housed. So "home" became the day's last location. Mem-

bers of the crew were quickly "cast" as extras, electrical extensions snaked from adjoining rooms while the director and cameraman improvised a strategy for the new scene - 11 set-ups, including shots incorporating the room's mirrors, towels, and slatted shades. The company wrapped at 2 a.m. The actor got back to the city by dawn and the Camaro's owner drove home.

In every low budget adventure, there are moments of serendipity and moments of angst. The gods - with help from a friend in the U.S. meteorological station - must have been with them. In a season of notoriously changeable weather, after a three week hiatus, they returned to South Jersey for the second half of location shooting to a brilliant, clear blue sky, perfectly matching what was already in the can. Of course there were also those moments when the local Cessna cowboy roared over a brilliant take, or a tractor on the working farm outside throttled up during an intensely quiet moment in the kitchen.

But there were also moments like the one on the second to last night on location when, shooting dusk for dawn, with the Aaton mounted on sticks on top of the equipment van, the sky obligingly pearled, then magically marbled. Adam and Doug decided to expose for the sky instead of the actor, adding a stunning Edward Hopperish flair to what could have been a simple cross-over scene.

Ultimately, what made the filming of *Medium Straight* possible was the impulse of every member of the team to give that critical extra ounce, such as the night when Russell Fine and Kristi Lomax returned after the wrap to the motel where the company had been housed and which had become a location for a new scene, to "catch" the moon rising through a veil of clouds behind the motel's neon sign. Or when everyone realized that the extra take, squeezed out of an exhausted cast and crew, was the "keeper." △

The author is a free-lance writer now working on a book in Hong Kong.

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Labyrinthine Plot for *Tunnels*

by David Heuring



Tunnels is a small-budget, independent film with interesting variations from the norm. As the title suggests, part of the story takes place in a network of underground tunnels. The twists and turns of the storyline are no less perplexing

than the maze of tunnels conjured for the film.

Behind the scenes, the story is equally unusual. *Tunnels* is the feature debut of both Roxanne di Santo, director of photography, and Mark Byers, director. Byers

produced, directed or wrote more than 600 television commercials prior to entering the feature field. Di Santo attended New York University's Film School, and her director of photography credits include several music videos and a UCLA graduate thesis film entitled *Holy Water*. She has served as first assistant, second unit on several big features, including *Casual Sex?*, *The Kindred* and *Best Seller*.

Originally, *Tunnels* was to be shot on location in Portland, Oregon, in an attempt to minimize fees, permits and red tape. Actual tunnels in the city's bowels had been secured for the underground sequences. Upon further investigation, however, production manager Gerard Di Nardi found a few Los Angeles area havens where friendly cooperation with a film company is not just a memory. When the cost of building the tunnels on a stage was found to be economical, *Tunnels* became a prodigal production.

The convoluted storyline of *Tunnels* provided di Santo with a variety of atmospheres and situations to photograph, including an autopsy room in a morgue, a newsroom, a ship's hold, and of course, the underground tunnels. The story surrounds two female reporters who discover a network of abandoned "Shanghai tunnels." Originally built for a smuggling ring, the tunnels have been secretly reopened by a fat cat real estate developer, whose cause, of late, has been aided by the mysterious dwindling of the city's homeless population. When the city's sewer system coughs up the body of a local bum, the story is off and running.

"Originally, this film was to take place in Oregon, so we

Photos by Heidi Jaeger

wanted to avoid the bright blue sky and saturated colors that typify the 'TV-LA' look," says di Santo. "By using 5297, Kodak's daylight balanced stock, I was able to achieve the right look. I rated the stock at ASA 200. The majority of the day exterior scenes we blocked in the shade, and I exposed for the actors in the shade. There was a 2-3 stop difference from the shade to the bright sunshine. Being exposed for the shady areas, the stock did not hold up in the bright, sunny areas. It merely burned out to a white sky, without detail, which was appropriate. There was no true indication of geographical location, so we were relieved of the 'L.A. look.'

"All the interiors turned out beautifully with the 5297. It's a great stock. I like using it for interiors with windows and HMIs. The high speed and fine grain of the 5297 was ideal for our interior situations. We used all prime lenses; I don't like zooms at all. We were able to afford high speed lenses for the first week of night exteriors, and the second week in the tunnels. In the interiors, like the newsroom, we used normal 2:1 lenses."

A first-time director working with a first-time cinematographer was cause for some anxiety on the set, but according to di Santo, everything went well. "Mark is very ambitious, especially for a first time director working with this budget," she says. "A lot of people in his shoes would just play it safe, but he took a lot of chances. He wanted the blocking to be very involved, with complex dolly moves. We generally had a lot of movement, especially in the newsroom where we tried to give the scenes some hustle and bustle. Mark's shot sheets had up to 40 setups a day. This was not feasible, especially for night exteriors, but fortunately it forced him to rethink things and be spontaneous. Sometimes we would have to chuck ten shots, but he would come up with something on the spot which would usually turn out even better. By combining several shots, Mark would get tighter results without sacrificing the coverage we needed.

"My focus puller, Steve Monroe, did a great job in some tough situations," continues di Santo. "In the tunnels and night exteriors, our F-stop was never more than 2 or 2.5. In the newsroom, sometimes we would rack focus five times in a single shot, starting on water dripping into a coffee cup, then rack focusing back to an actor in the background, whip panning around, then rack focusing back to another actor at a desk. It was really a blast to try and pull



Top: *di Santo*
Left: *An archway frames a shot on the docks in San Pedro, as Cork Hubbard sets his boss up for betrayal. Below: Orange light pours over Nicholas Guest as his betrayal is revealed.*





Above: The crew in the "maze" of tunnels constructed on a sound stage. Right: Charlene Dallas (Pam) and Catherine Bach (Sharon) imprisoned in one of the tunnel holding cells.



something like that off."

One week of principal photography was scheduled for the newsroom scenes, filmed in the offices of *The Star Progress* in La Habra. "The newsroom was probably my biggest challenge, because of all the fluorescents," recalls di Santo. "Originally, I had ordered replacement tubes that would read white light to avoid fighting the fluorescent green. The day we were to start shooting, we found that the new tubes had been misordered — they had lead contacts which were

incompatible with the fixtures in the office. As a result, we had to go with all available fluorescents.

"I had counted on the tubes, and to save money I hadn't ordered any magenta gel, which would have corrected for the green. So we just had to time it all out in the lab. Unfortunately, you never get a true skin tone that way, but it can be worked out. Of course, once you know that the lab is going to time out the green, you have to be very careful what kind of green you put on your tungsten. I brought

some artificial daylight into the newsroom by shooting a 10K from the next room through a window in a door. It was a nice effect, but with the fluorescents and the tungsten and the time of day changing, it became very complicated. I had to do some quick thinking: How warm should I make it? Should I put green on it as well as blue? Add orange for later in the day? But if the lab takes all the green from the blue, I'll have yellow, and I don't want yellow, and also, some of the tungstens will be reading orange. Anyway, I was going nuts. It was frustrating and challenging. Watching the untimed dailies, with bright pink or green faces, is the hardest part for me. Fortunately, when timed, the scenes looked fine."

The tunnels were constructed on a stage in West Los Angeles. Di Santo's lighting and art director Cole Lewis' designs created the illusion of a myriad of tunnels when, in fact, there were only four. "In the tunnels, I had to change my way of thinking for the sake of the story and the director's vision," says di Santo. "Mark wanted the tunnels to be pure fantasy. Before shooting, we watched many films to decide how fantastic the look should be. Mark decided that he wanted a Spielberg-like fantasy look with lots of unmotivated ambient light, so you could always see what was going on in the tunnels. I had to fight my instincts for the sake of the story, because I usually like a hyper-realistic style, realism with a touch of embellishment beyond what the eye really sees. After committing to the fantasy style, I really went crazy and lit very expressionistically, with a slash here and a slash there. Being inconsistent was kind of fun for a change, and the scenes turned out nicely."

Elaborate plans were laid for the scene in which the body of a local bum floats out of a culvert, revealing to the audience that the tunnels are being used for evil purposes. A concrete channel was dammed off in a local park so that the water level could be controlled, and the camera was mounted on a rubber raft. "Unfortunately, we weren't able to use the raft shot. We

couldn't afford a video tap and monitor, and the water was rushing pretty fast, so I was shouting instructions to the grips, 'left! left!' and when I would pan, it would throw the raft off level. Then, our wood and sandbag dam was breaking every ten minutes or so," laughs Di Santo. "We got an alternative shot, with the sticks in the water, which turned out great anyway. It lingers on the hole with the water rushing out, and then tilts down to the foreground and the floating body."

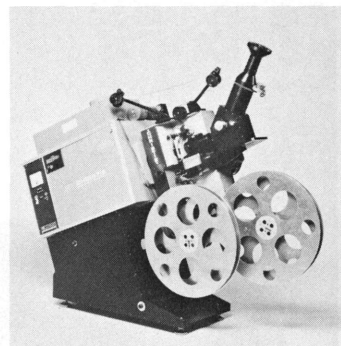
In a climactic sequence filmed in the hold of a ship, the reporters find that a trusted confidant is actually in cahoots with the villain. This sequence and the ensuing chase constitute an important turning point in the film. "I think some of the more effective cinematography in the film takes place in the ship's hold," says di Santo. "We wanted a tense, eerie feeling, while staying with the fantasy idea. The actors were lit with a seedy-looking green. About 30 feet behind them was a hole leading deeper into the ship, where the homeless were hidden. I had a 5K shooting very warm orange light up through the hole, and another 5K shooting the same warm orange light down the stairwell into the hold of the ship. We also had some smoke to diffuse and disperse the light. In other scenes on the exterior of the ship, I framed several shots with an interesting archway. This archway consisted of vertical panels with a row of circles on either side, cut right into the metal. I put diffusion on the circles and placed nook lights in the hollow of the arch. It comes off like a huge ominous monolith, again giving the scene that fantasy feel that we were looking for."

Gunshots ring out in the ship's hold, and the two reporters are off on a chase through the nearby streets. The sequence culminates in a car stunt covered by three cameras. "This scene, a night shot that covers two city blocks, was very difficult to light without HMI's," recalls di Santo. "I think I used every light we had. There were two 10K's, three 5K's and a few

bars. I had one 10K at the very far end hitting a building, which gave it some depth. So in the shot, which turned out to be pretty dramatic, a car comes down the long stretch of road, passing in and out of the light. When the car reaches the girls, it goes into a stunt spin. We covered it with a whip pan on the side, another camera with a long lens, and a Ilc which was locked off."

One of the most interesting locations for the *Tunnels* crew was the autopsy room and morgue at Camarillo State Hospital. At the morgue, the reporters pull the wool over the eyes of an employee in order to get their information. "The morgue was fun to shoot. There were no windows, so it was all 94. I gelled the fluorescents in certain rooms, and let them read green in other places, to give it a seedy and institutional look, like the unpleasant place that it is. For a shot in a waiting area, I gelled the fluorescents in the room and let the adjacent hallway read green. There were two reasons for this," she laughs. "One was that we didn't have enough gel to go all the way down that long hallway. But the other reason was psychological - it gives you the creeps, looking down this long morgue hallway with green light."

Female directors of photography are rare, but di Santo plays down the role of gender in her career. "I want to be known as a director of photography, not as a female director of photography. Just being good at what I do is the biggest statement I can make. Also, I don't think that being a woman has kept me from getting any jobs. In fact, some people like the idea of a female DP, so maybe some doors have been opened by reverse discrimination. I think my age is more of a stumbling block than my gender," says di Santo, who is 26. "*Tunnels* was my first feature, so I'm still self-conscious when I say to people, 'I'm a director of photography.' It's a good feeling, though. I'm sure I'll get used to it." △



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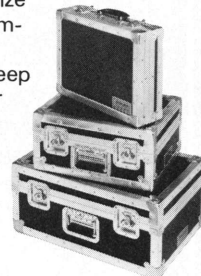
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Reflections 4 : Daviau

by Nora Lee



It is difficult to choose Allen Daviau's best film when one is given a list like *E.T.: The Extraterrestrial*, *The Color Purple*, *The Falcon and the Snowman*, and *Em-*



pire of the Sun. Each was a *tour de force* and explains why he is one of the youngest members of the American Society of Cinematographers. He participated recently in the Panavision/University of Southern California lighting seminars and chose a favorite scene from the award winning *Empire of the Sun* to illustrate a lesson in natural lighting.

In this scene Jim convinces himself he has started the war. When he looks out of his hotel room window towards the harbor he sees a signal light on a ship. He returns the signal with his own flashlight and the first bombs rattle the silence of morning.

Daviau explained the choice, "What I loved about this scene in the picture is it's the first time I've ever gotten both the softness and the color of dawn light in a way that pleased me. I called it 'the first lilac

glow of dawn.' And it was done in a very pure manner. The light source for the room is coming entirely through the window. We had a 12 foot by 12 foot Griflon outside and

five 10Ks with Lee half blue. That light is bounced through the window to illuminate Jim at the bed and standing by the window. We also have a backing, just a grey dawn backing, which is lit with four units...I put one little tiny chicken light as an over-the-camera bounce light, but I don't think it made any difference at all."

It is one of only two scenes in the entire film that was photographed on stage. Everything else was on location. In fact, this shot was a challenge because it had to cut in with location footage from Shanghai. Daviau was pleased that he was able to recreate the "lilac glow" with the help of a carefully painted backing and reflected light.

The recreation of this scene at USC prompted Daviau to share his thoughts on the origins of 'soft light' and its uses. "In

the very beginning," he explained, "Motion pictures were shot in hard light because they had to shoot in direct sun just to get an image. Then the Edison people took the 'Black Moria' [a box car-shaped stage that Thomas Edison mounted on a turntable so that it could follow the sun during a day of shooting] and covered it with great big muslin screens to soften the light. Then we started to get away from sunlight and use artificial light on stage. Because the film was so slow, cinematographers were back to using direct light from the lamps just to get exposure. By the 30s the film was fast enough that people started to experiment with diffused light, bounced light, and other kinds of indirect light. The standard procedure was still very much based around hard light.

"And yet cinematographers have been very consistent in saying they have studied paintings and admired the very idealized north light that painters use. For a painter, north light stayed the most consistent throughout the day and also stayed softest. My favorite, and one of the most famous studies of lighting, is a Vermeer painting called 'Girl with a Pearl Necklace.' The painting has a girl standing at a window on the left side of the frame adjusting her



Light Values

(with reflected light meter)

Tanner's face at window: T 2.8 5/10

Backing (brightest): T 2.8/10

Backing (darkest): T 2

Grey Wall: T 1 7/10

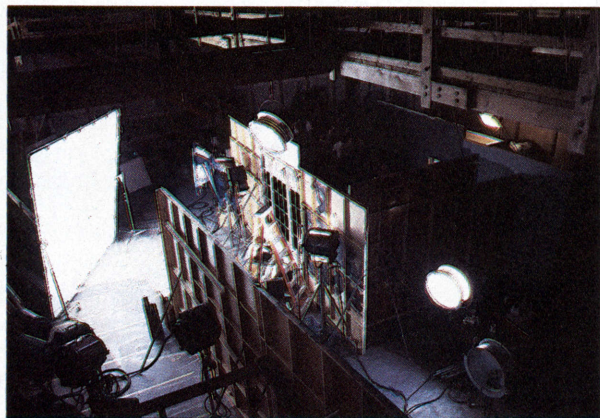
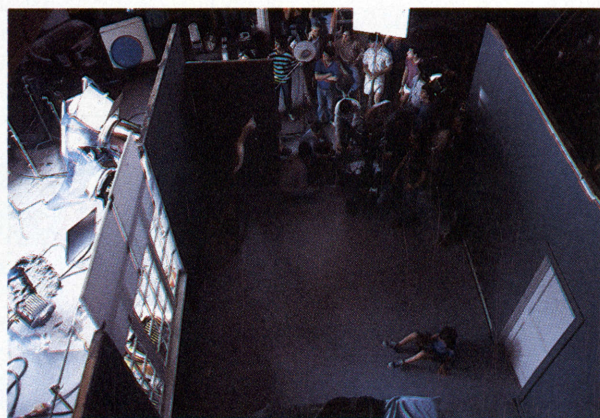
Flashlight beam (brightest): T 1.4 4/10

(with incident light meter pointed at source)

Grey wall: T 1.4 7/10

Half-way to window: T 2.8/4

At Tanner's face: T 4



Technical Data

Lens: Panavision 27mm Primo

Iris Setting: T 2.8 4/10

Camera: Panavision Platinum

Format: 1.85:1

Dolly: FGV Panther IIS

Film Stock: Eastman Kodak 5294

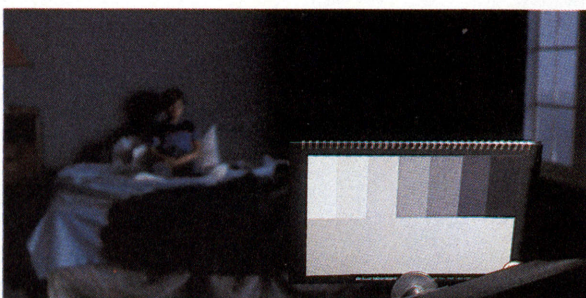
Film Rating: ASA 320

Lights: 2 5K Sky Pans, 5 Baby 10Ks from Lee America West (Tungsten)

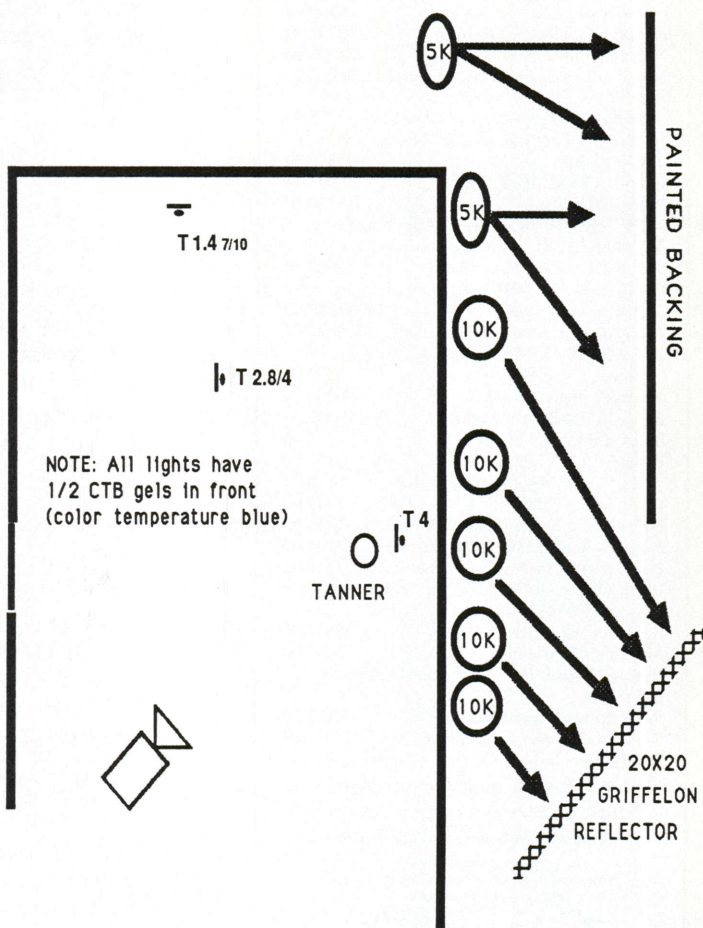
Sound Stage: Cinema/Television School, USC

Processing and Workprint: Technical Lab

Timing Lights: Yellow = 18, Cyan = 37, Magenta = 38



Opposite page:
Tanner Peterman
re-enacts a scene
from Empire of the
Sun. (From timed
low contrast work
print.) Left: Slate is
lit by 3200K light in
foreground so as to
communicate the
proper timing to
the lab. (From
timed low contrast
work print.) Below
left: Overhead shot
of soundstage
showing set. Bot-
tom left: Overhead
shot of soundstage
showing backing
and Griffon.



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pearl necklace. But the real subject of the painting is the center and the right side. It is the study of the light from that window illuminating the wall. That's what so many of Vermeer's paintings were about – the light itself.

"Photographers and cinematographers had always admired the quality of this light. But it was some illustrative still photographers of the 50s that revived north window single source lighting. A lot of still life and advertising work began to be done in this way. These same still photographers moved into television commercials and brought their lighting styles with them. Film directors could see in television commercials a style of lighting they weren't getting on film, a look they wanted."

The idea of large source soft lighting was adopted by filmmakers in the 60s and set the tone for much of what we call modern cinematography. "Faster lenses, a tendency to work more on locations, faster films and other factors have combined to bring that look to cinematography," continued Daviau. "Faster films and lenses give the opportunity to work with more basic light sources because we are not fighting for just an exposure. And now, even when we've returned to the studio, things that we learned on location influence our stage work. I tend to prefer cinematography that looks naturalistic. So do most of today's cinematographers."

The desirability of working with a naturalistic, single source of light partly dictated Daviau's choice of lens and film stock. He used Kodak's 5294 for this scene and for all of the interior, tungsten lit scenes in Empire. "We were able to work at a decent stop on the lens and still use a low level illumination. I'm not a wide open cameraman most of the time – all though I'll do it when I have to. The high speed stock allows me to work at something around f2.8."

He continued, "Another really nice thing about this type of lighting is that if you have a source coming through a window and the direction and the intensity and the quality of the light is true and correct, you can shoot almost all the coverage in the room without changing the position of your light source, regardless of the direction. The key source, once it was established in this scene, didn't move for the boy's close-ups."

Daviau laughed when questioned about his metering style. "I don't know why I do what I do. Half of it is superstition. I believe in reading with the meter directly towards the source, not toward the camera. I want to know what the end result is at the position of the light reaching the subject. It doesn't matter

whether it's hard light or soft light, I want to know how much light is there. So, I use an incident meter to reach the pertinent source. I base my decision on how to expose the subject on that reading more than anything else."

Daviau reiterated the importance of the film laboratory to the work he does and shared the secret of "silent communication." "After I light a scene and pick the exposure, then I set up a grey scale card in white light in the foreground of the scene. I'll read the color temperature on the card and make sure it's close. Then, I expose so that the grey scale – in both an incident reading and a reflective reading on the center chip – is exactly what I've determined the exposure of the scene behind it to be. That means the lab should send me back just exactly what I want. The grey scale in the foreground should be exposed dead on "normal" both in color and exposure value. This allows the person on the Hazeltine analyzer to look and see that, if they get the grey scale correct, then I really do want the scene in the back to be as dark as it appears. *Don't try to save me.* I call this silent communication with the laboratory." Daviau also sends along extensive written directions to back-up his visual cues. "Never forget your laboratory contact person should always know what effect you are striving for."

"People say, 'why don't you use a color scale?' If you think about it, to ask color film to render white, black and shades of grey is the most challenging thing you can ask it to do. You are asking it to reproduce utter neutrality. It is also the easiest thing to read in a screening. I can sit there and when my grey scale hits the screen in dailies, I can tell in an instant which direction the color balance is leaning. A color chart can be extremely subjective because it is concerned with hues. But a grey scale is dealing with the most basic things you deal with when timing a print. How are your three primary colors talking to your three complementary color dyes and telling them how to reproduce the scene? So if the lab can send me back white, black and shades of grey, then I know we're on standard."

If there was one message Daviau wanted to leave with the aspiring camera people at the seminar it was, "The purity of the source is what makes the scene real... You need to have a strong feeling for the quality of light that is correct for the scene. Not only in being natural, but in the underlying drama of the scene. You can, on a fast paced schedule, achieve this look with the simplest of means. You can be a purist, dramatically correct and efficient in execution – all at the same time." △

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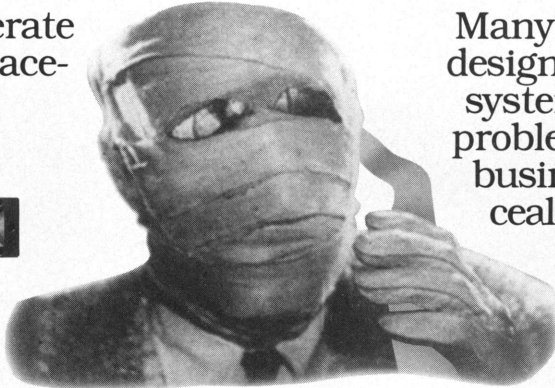
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Matching Up for *Willow* Mattes

by George Turner

Matte paintings have been an important aid to the creation of motion picture illusions since the early days of the industry, but members of the matte department at Industrial Light and Magic have added some new tricks to the venerable idea for some gorgeous scenes in *Willow*. The work was done under

the direction of Chris Evans, matte painting supervisor.

Matte painters contributing their artistry to the *Willow* look were Michael Pangrazio, Caroleen Green, Sean Joyce, and Paul Swendsen. Craig Barron, director of matte photography, and cameramen Wade Childress and Randy

Johnson provided some of the unusual photographic techniques that add dimension to what used to be considered a flat process.

"We're always thinking up ways to get a little more life and movement into the matte shots because the mattes are, of course, flat art work to start with," explained

Barron. "In real life the trees, grass and clouds always move in the wind, maybe some birds fly overhead, the light changes through the clouds... we try to include and mimic these true to life elements in order to make the matte paintings come to life. We approach things with a fidelity to nature, and of course, the director's approval."

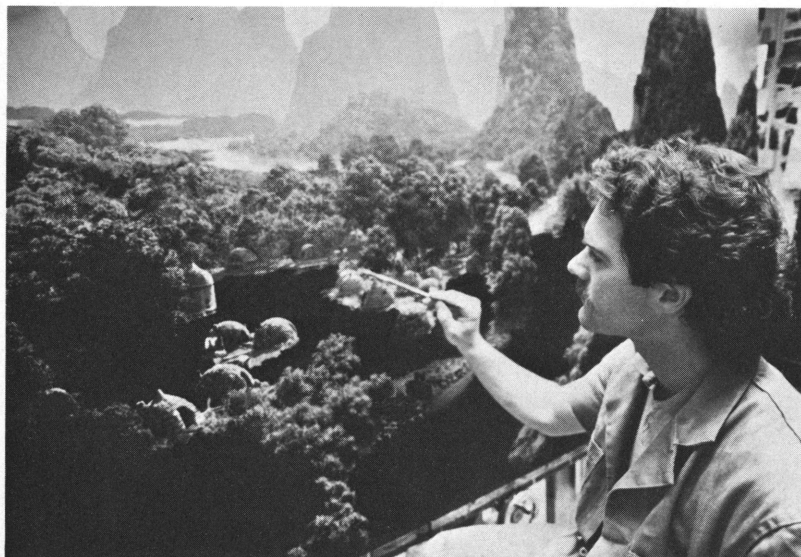
Evans described the evolution of the project:

"Our part of it began when George Lucas called Craig and Mike and I out to Skywalker Ranch and we went through a very rough cut of the picture," Evans recalled. "He would stop from time to time and say, 'We need a shot of a castle here' or 'We need a landscape there.' He gave us his shopping list of about 30 matte shots.

"We then proceeded to work out the visual and technical design of all those shots. At that point there were no storyboards, we had just a cut before and a cut after. We talked to George and Ron Howard about what they wanted to see, came up with a number of variations of each shot, and then did full color sketches or small paintings to establish what the shot was going to look like. In a few cases we were able to use existing VistaVision plates which were shot for us in England by Mike McAlister, but it became apparent that we needed to shoot about a dozen live-action VistaVision plates for what George called the 'trekking shots,' in which the characters in the film were journeying through fantastic landscapes. We were trying to tie in certain landscapes that were shot in New Zealand with others made in England, and – to make them even more fantastic – George especially wanted us to capture the look of a certain terrain that is found only in Southern China, in the valley of the Li River."

Six of the leading little people actors portraying Nelwyns were flown over from England and, for two weeks, live action plates for the trek were filmed in Northern California and Marin Country. Evans was given the job of second unit director for these scenes.

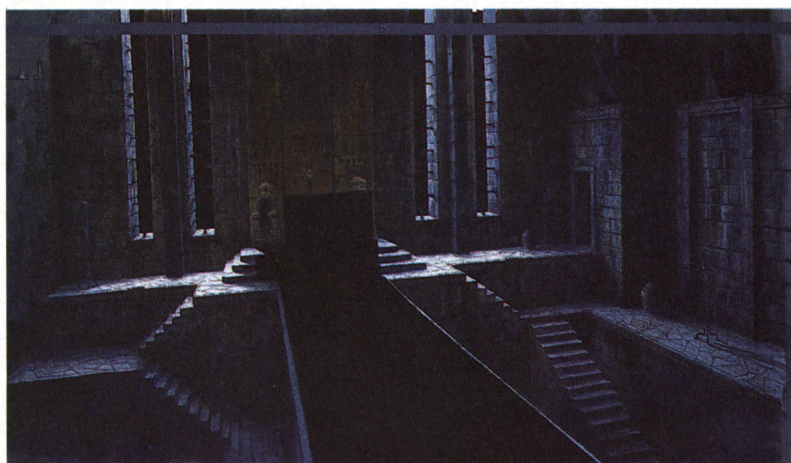
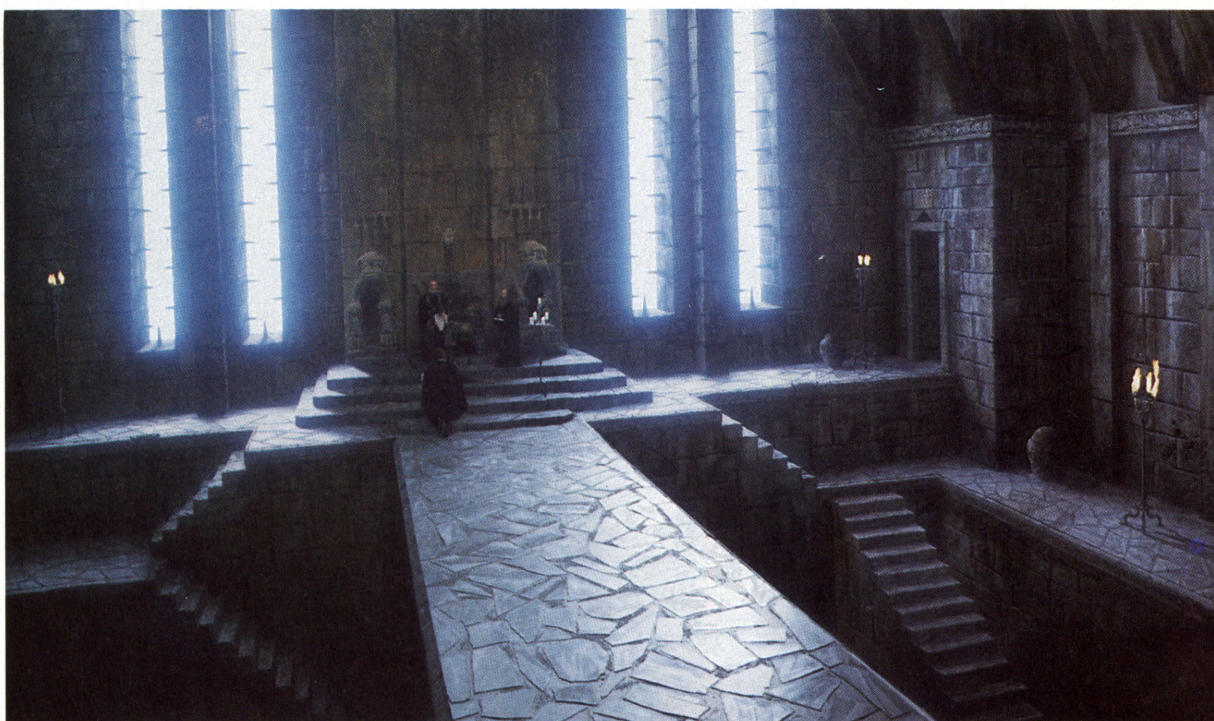
"Some of the best matte



Opposite page: Two frames from the spectacular camera pull-back at the end of Willow. The stream, the people and parts of the village are real, the rest is a highly sophisticated matte painting. Top: Artist Chris Evans applies the finishing touches to the painting. Center: Matte cameraman Wade Childress focuses the rear projector for projection of live action plate into canyon model. Below: Evans details around the face of the rear projection screen to match modelmaker Paul Houston's canyon model.

Photos by Kerry Nordquist and Sean Casey

Right: *Queen Bavmorda's throne room as it appears in the film – an effective yet economical matte shot. Below: The painting before live elements – the walkway and the immediate area in which the actors move – were composited with the art.*



shots were photographed latent VistaVision, which gave us the option of doing an optical pan or tilt to the shot, making it look as if a cameraman is following the action or adjusting the shot's end composition," Barron said.

One particularly effective shot in this series shows the trekkers emerging from a valley along a waterfall, with Li Valley type rock formations in the background. "We photographed this at Birney Falls, in Oregon. Chris matted out the top of the falls with black cardboard in the camera's matte box, so that later he could paint in the Chinese mountains that George

(Lucas) liked so much. After we composited the painting into the latent image VistaVision, optical provided a tilt down from the mountains to the Nelwyns walking by the waterfall. John Ellis, the optical supervisor and John Alexander worked on the motorized optical printer tilts, adding a great deal of their expertise to our work."

Evans noted that "When the little people were supposed to walk along a log crossing a ravine, we had them walk along the roof of a big truck. They were photographed in silhouette against a white sky, then we made mattes and ran them bi-pack against the

full painting of the gorge."

Barron said that for a scene in which the Nelwyns trek down the side of a hill at sunset, a real sky was photographed (actually at sunrise). "Between the camera and the sky we set up a silhouette of mountain shapes, cut from a 4 X 8-foot sheet of Masonite. We got some very dramatic clouds, which we photographed in time-lapse to get some movement of the clouds as well as adding some birds flying through. We brought this back as a latent image and then Paul Swendsen added the mountains to make a pre-composite latent image, and with that element we ran a hold-out of the Nelwyns which we photographed at the ranch at magic hour. That element was bi-packed with the background to make the final composite."

One of the longer and more elaborate shots opens with a close view of two horsemen riding in the depths of a maze of twisting desert canyons, then the camera booms back and up until it is above the level of the canyon rim. This was photographed by Wade Childress using the Automatte camera. Evans told how it was done:

"It was made in a very elaborate miniature with a big

background canvas going off into infinity. Paul Huston was the master modelmaker. I designed the shot to go around a VistaVision plate which McAlister shot in New Zealand of the horsemen with a rock wall behind them. The plate was rear projected on a glass window built into a bas-relief canyon wall – this had been done long ago in *King Kong* in black and white. We blended in painted rock on the surface of the glass – matte line joins – and that blended off into a low-relief model, which became a full three dimensional model. It was a very interesting transition: flat projection, flat painting, painting on a low-relief sculpted miniature, and full relief model – in one piece. This enabled us to pull back on the projection, and as we moved up we kept the projection at the bottom of the frame, and we also had the changing parallax so you can see over the top of the rock they were in front of, and around it. As if that wasn't difficult enough, George wanted a crow flying through the canyon, so we had Kim Marks photograph a crow against a white sky and we managed to bi-pack it in as we did the move on the Automatte."

Another scene in which a matte painting utilizes a constructed miniature element depicts a night camp in the snow. Light flickers inside a tent. In painting the scene, Pangrazio rendered the tent in silhouette. Huston made a miniature tent and illuminated it from the inside, creating a live element that was photographed into the latent image.

Barron described the scenes of the interior of Queen Bavmorda's throne room as "a good example of an impressive, yet economical matte shot that is done with a minimal amount of set construction. We photographed the live action portion with ILM's head gaffer, Pat Fitzsimmons, on our sound stage with a piece of painted black foam core between the camera and the set. We then latent imaged the painting back in at the matte department. We only built as much of the set as we needed, just tiles glued to the floor, a few steps,



Left: Carolleen Green works on the throne room matte painting. **Below:** Live action plate being shot for the throne room scene.



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and a throne cut from polyester foam. Caroleen Green was the matte painter working from a design by Sean Joyce."

Another interesting combination of matte painting and miniature set is the evil castle, a mass of spires, towers, battlements, banners, sconces and a wealth of details that add up to a sense of reality even within the framework of fantasy. Surrounding it is a barren desolation made more forbidding by skeletons and crucified scarecrow-like figures. The miniature setting, built by Huston, occupied about 16 X 20 feet of stage. "These are the kinds of shots we work on a lot - establishing shots of castles," Barron commented. "Matte shots are often used in fantasy films for setting the mood of a place that either does not exist or would be too difficult for the production's camera crew to wait around and get."

Evans described the castle views as "latent-image VistaVision shots wherein the paintings were burned into the miniature. Craig and Mike have pioneered the technique of building a miniature of a location for the purpose of getting all the lighting, detail, and every good quality that a miniature can give, leaving it latent on the film, and then doing a matte painting which adds to the miniature all the qualities that only painting can get. It is essentially a double strength illusion, visually comparable to an alloy, such as when the strength of tin, which is flexible, is combined with the strength of copper, which is hard, to produce bronze. Miniatures look like miniatures and paintings look like paintings, but put the two together and it can become a very successful illusion. Pangrazio did the close-up and I did the long shot."

To show Willow leaving Kir Asleen castle amid cheering well-wishers, a partial set was built of the doorway and a pair of pillars. Mike Pangrazio made a matte painting to add more of the castle. "The painting also incorporated a miniature which had hanging banners over part of the miniature cylinders," Barron stated. "When we got the shot back, George wanted to add some more well-wishers both on the left and right, so they were

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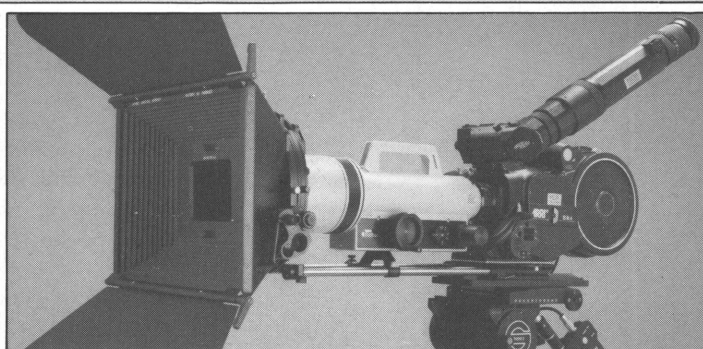
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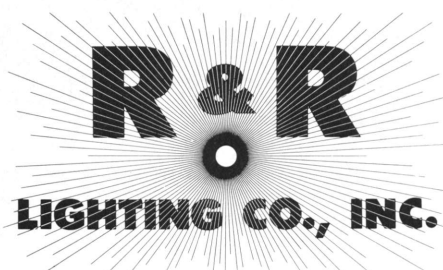
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blue screened in. It was a very difficult shot because, in addition to all these elements, the optical printer camera is tilting up as Willow exits the frame to show the top of the castle with the banners blowing."

According to Evans, the biggest shot in *Willow* is also the last. "It's the most challenging one I've ever had. George needed an impressive happy ending that showed that peace had come back to the land. He wanted the matte shot to pull way, way back from a tight shot of the village to show a distant landscape. The challenge was to have a clarity in the atmosphere to enable one to see into the distance, yet maintain the soft, silvery light quality of the village in England where they worked. He also wanted to have the quality of light that is found in the Hudson River School of painting. I chose the silvery-grey light of Frederick Kinsett rather than the orange golden light of, say, Bierstadt. And he wanted to set it in that Li River setting.

"We sent Scott Farrar off to shoot a river plate overlooking a rushing stream in Northern California. Then Craig and I photographed a second rear projection plate of a little village with some huts, little people, a pony, chickens, pigs and a group of school children. We photographed from a 25-foot platform. Then I painted a 6 x 10-foot matte of the valley with the strange rock formations and we rear projected in the river and the village. We even used some photo-montage for some of the foreground detail in the forest with an elaborate optical pull-back by Wade Childress and Randy Johnson - it's 50 seconds long. Then the titles roll into it and it fades to black."

The day the shot came up in dailies a film crew from *60 Minutes* was in the screening room filming Lucas discussing the dailies. Later, the cameraman said he had recently been on assignment in the Valley of the Li River, and he was very surprised that Lucas was able to get permission from the Chinese government to clear out an area of the forest to build the village.

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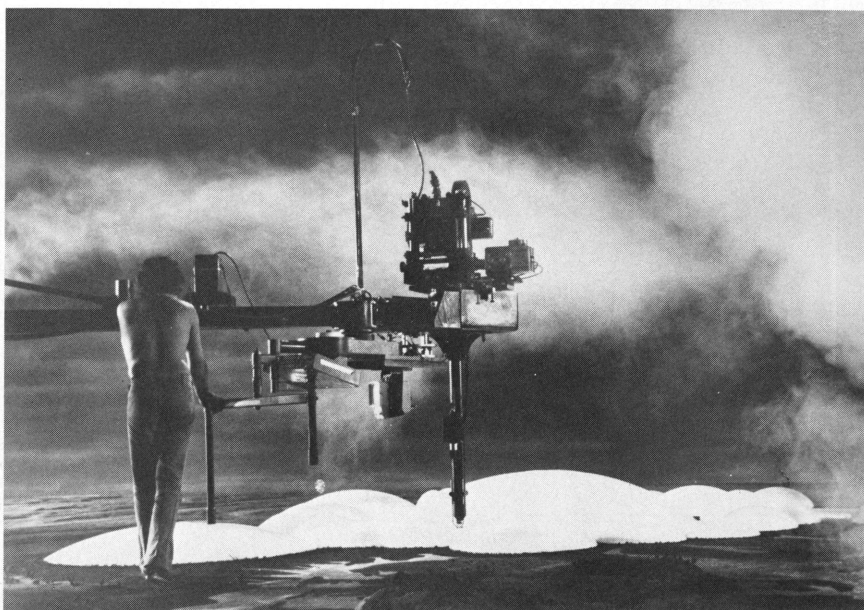
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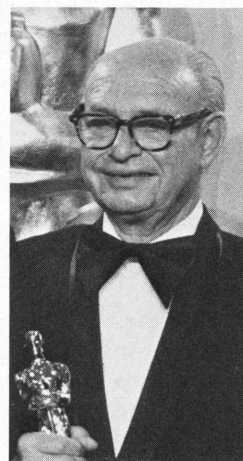
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Photos by Dan Groschong

High Speed Film Covers *Best Shots*

by Randy Love

At 2 a.m. in San Francisco we are working on the 41st floor of a downtown high rise for a scene from *Best Shots*. The director, Doug Lodato and I have lined up a dolly shot following two of the principal actors as they talk and embrace along a large glass walled room high above the skyline.

The city lights unfold behind the actors; the office interior is lit with only two lights, one a practical on a dimmer and the other a 750 watt soft light through a small silk. We key the scene with the 750 soft at six foot candles; the practical provides only 1½ footcandles. Using a 6K HMI and two HMI pars, we pick up the Transamerica pyramid, an apartment complex and the Bank of America building in the background.

This film is unusual be-

cause we are shooting an entire feature's interiors and night exteriors on Eastman 5295, a T-grain film-stock originally designed for blue screen applications.

Needing a crisp commercial look on the screen, the 5295 seemed a natural. On previous commercial applications I had found it superior to Eastman 5294, also a high speed film. The 5295 exhibits finer grain and more latitude than 5294 and was able to handle overexposure by as much as five stops.

After being retained as director of photography on *Best Shots*, I wanted to make certain the stock of 5295 was plentiful. Eastman assured us of its availability since the company was interested in the fact that 90 percent of our film is a live action picture with no special

effects.

I tested all the available stocks and assessed 5295 as being sharpest, with least grain. In the tests we found the film matched with 5247 perfectly, so those were the two chosen.

I treated the 5295 stock as I would have treated 5294, lighting most scenes with HMIs without an 85 filter. Double straw gels (Lee #103) or chocolate gel (Lee #156) were used on the HMIs for day interiors. The '95 stock, even with its reputation as a blue screen film, handled the subtraction of blue in the lab very well. Monaco Laboratories in San Francisco did a superb job of processing and workprinting all the footage from *Best Shots*.

By shooting at a slower ASA of 250, instead of the recommended 400, I could bring the

printer lights in at the mid 30's. We also rated 5247 at ASA 100 instead of 125 in order to provide a thicker negative, thus gaining better grain reduction, color rendition and ultimately a better looking release print.

Each scene in *Best Shots* was designed with a specific "look." Jack Wright, production designer, spent three days with us in preproduction to create a unique visual style for each scene. Doug stretched a 20 foot piece of butcher paper on the wall and after discussing each scene we wrote down all of our ideas about how the scene should look in terms of color, light, time of day, shadows, sets, windows, reflections, and anything else related to the visual continuity of the film. These brainstorming sessions provided a visual road map and were crucial to the style of *Best Shots*.

Best Shots is a comedy which has an atypical look to it. I used very little soft light. Most scenes were lit with 6K HMI's through windows with little or no fill. In the jail scene at the beginning of the film, the rather large lobby is lit through the exterior windows with 2 6K's, 2 4K's and 2 2500's. The effect was that of the late afternoon sun streaming through the windows. All of the HMI's had double #103 filters on them and a single layer of opal. For interior fill I used only one bulb of a double fay unit bounced off foamcore to slightly raise the black detail.

We used smoke on nearly every interior in the film to create a visual ambiance which cannot be achieved through lens filtration. When single sourcing the key light, with little or no fill, the smoke in the room scatters the key light and becomes a fill source of its own. We used the cracked oil type of smoker which utilizes compressed air forced through vegetable oil which vaporizes rather than burns the oil. It is the only type of smoke effect which doesn't leave the crew and talent with a residue in their lungs. Of the 35 shooting days on *Best Shots*, 30 were shot with smoke.

We utilized Arriflex camera equipment, a BL 3, and Arri 3,



Opposite page: Trip Atherton (John Scott Clough) and Lia (Kim Myers) in downtown high rise scene. Left: Mark Poppel and Clough in the San Francisco loft apartment. (Frame enlargements) Below left: Poppel sneaking into Uncle Jack's mansion at night.



Right: Punk patrons of the "Red Pit" framed by lattice. Below: Poppel and Myers emerge from San Francisco Bay after a car stunt.



Zeiss high speeds, a Cooke 5-1 and a 10-1 and a Canon 400 with a 2x. I also used the new Mitchell gear-head which I liked very much. The Zeiss high speeds were essential for this type of shoot, as we had many night interiors and exterior locations. I would often key at 7 foot candles for a night exterior and from 7-15 foot candles on a night interior. My first camera assistant, Barbara Kloeppel, with whom I have worked for five years, did an excellent job on the focus although

she often had no more than two inches depth of field while working with longer focal length lenses. Mike Maley was my gaffer.

We shot for eight days in a loft type apartment which overlooked the San Francisco Bay Bridge, and had over 500 square feet of windows – all on the 4th floor of an old warehouse. In one scene that was designed to play in late afternoon light, two 6K HMI's provided source light through a false wall. The wall enabled us to

light the loft from the exterior even though we were on the 4th floor. The scene played over one half of the loft, and the best we could get out of the 6K's was a T4 reading with the '95 stock. Outside read T22 with the spotmeter. In this situation we went with '95 instead of '47 because of its highlight handling ability. The windows were $4\frac{2}{3}$ stops overexposed from the scene (shot at a T4.5) and the windows still held detail. The Bay Bridge is somewhat washed out, but the effect is pleasing and very stylized, as one senses the environment of the loft in the daytime rather than a pure, white blown out window behind the actors.

Best Shots was filmed entirely on location in San Francisco. Most of the scenes, while not presenting themselves as technically difficult, were creatively satisfying to light and shoot. One scene, however, which took place in the television section of a department store was tough. All 200 television sets had to show in sync with no roll bar and play a 4-page scene in this location. Marc Poppel, (who plays the lead, Tom Kidd) is watching the

state lottery while surrounded by the display of TV's. He then gets into a fracas with a salesman and the TV's begin to wildly change channels as the two men fight for the remote channel changer. The camera dollies 60 feet down an aisle with TV's changing channels all over - foreground, background and in between.

We shot a test by running the Arri BL at 23.796 fps, controlled by a precision speed control with a 144° variable shutter, and all 200 TV's were perfectly clear - no roll bar! Anne Evens, the sound mixer had utilized this technique before on another feature, so she controlled her Nagra with a 60hz crystal which was then transferred on a 59.97 resolver to full coat 35mm mag. stock. When transferred, the film and the sound were in perfect sync. The takes were kept down to one minute or less because of the potential for sound drift, and the scene worked well.

One of the most visually exciting scenes in *Best Shots* takes place at the "Red Pit," a punk slam dance club that the director envisioned as a real life version of the cantina scene in *Star Wars*. Trip, always rather straight, has been taken to the club by his date, a very sexy punk bicycle messenger. Upon their entrance into the club, Doug wanted Trip to be accosted by punks slamming their heads and fists through a latticed wall conceived by Jack Wright. We heavily backlit the wall with two 6K HMI's and lit the interior of the club with tungsten in pools of colored light, and then added smoke. I let the HMI's go blue, and they created wonderful streams of blue smoky light which backlit the wall-bashing punks. The foot candle values in this scene range from a key of 20 up to 320 for the HMI's, and down to as little as 3 foot candles for the shadow areas. This scene was another testament to the latitude of 5295 stock.

As director and writer, Doug Lodato was determined from the start to make *Best Shots* look like a bigger budget film than it actually was. The visual stylization of each sequence attests to this. △

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Photos by Jeff Hoffman

Sun Belt Saga for Germany

by Daphne Muscarella

American is taking Germany by storm, and that storm is the *Sunbelt Saga*. Second in a series on America and her music, and as American as mint julep, as grass roots as catfish, as lively as jambalaya and as hot as blackened redfish, this thirteen-episode series is currently in production in the Southern States and the Caribbean. Celebrating the musical legacy of the South, from the gates of Graceland to the newest trend, Cajun music, *Sunbelt Saga* sets out to capture the essence of our country and translate its exuberance to German viewers.

It all started in the spring of 1985 with *Go West, Sing West*, a

series on the American West, its music and its tradition, hosted by Dale Robertson, and side-kick Ken Curtis (Festus of *Gunsmoke* fame). Featuring over 40 musical performances, live and on location, by the likes of Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash, Glen Campbell, and Burl Ives, this piece of Americana that would have made Norman Rockwell jealous was greeted with cheers and yee-haas by German viewers.

So popular was its reception, that producer Gunter Ciechowski of Tel Max Films Wiesbaden, West Germany was asked by West German Television

to produce another, similar series on music in America. Of paramount importance in selecting a crew was the ability to let the German viewers experience our country through the eyes of an American. No German crew could be familiar enough with the essential subtleties that make America unique.

Director/Cameraman Jeff Hoffman, whose unique cinematography brought success to the first series, was asked by the head of the German network to use his skills to bring the flavor and tradition of the music and people of the South to the German viewers.

Hoffman's crew used ingenious techniques to provide captivating footage that exemplifies the richness and diversity of the South and its music.

What could exemplify the American melting pot better than a German producer, a Yankee cameraman, a Japanese assistant cameraman (Yuki Matsumoto, son of a Kamikaze pilot who lived), and a soundman with the unlikely name of Nelson Funk (funk is German for radio), travelling over 15,000 miles by van, helicopter, steam locomotive, pirogue, horseback, combine and riverboat to film a paddlewheel race up the Mississippi, an alligator hunt by moonlight in the Bayous, and the exuberance of Dixieland jazz in New Orleans?

More than 65,000 feet of 16mm film was shot in three months, often in three or four states in as many days. Hoffman explains the techniques that enabled the crew to stay on schedule and maintain their sanity through an often grueling itinerary: "We didn't have a set script to follow, and because the production demanded that we film events as they occurred, we never knew exactly where or what we'd be shooting next. I pinned a map of the South on the wall and the crew threw darts at it, taking bets on where we'd be next. One morning we shot Cajun musicians in Lafayette, wrapped, gobbled a sandwich in the van, and made it to New Orleans in time for an Octoberfest parade in the afternoon."

The name *Sunbelt Saga* implies no overcast visuals – everything bright and sunny – so most of the film was shot in early morning or late afternoon light. Kodak 7292 was selected to provide the golden glow which gave warmth and richness to the cypress trees, bayous, cotton and sugar cane fields, and most important, captured the warmth of the people. All the music was recorded live, on location, with a Nagra stereo recorder – from the frenzy of gospel singers in a ramshackle church and the grittiness of jazz and blues performed in their birthplace, to Herb Jeffries' eloquent rendition of "Old Man River" on the stern of a pad-



Opposite page: A pirogue on the Bayou at sunset. Above: Jeff Hoffman and assistant cameraman Yuki Matsumoto track in front of a Dixieland jazz band in the French Quarter, New Orleans. Left: A cappella group "Seduction" performing in front of the French Market.

dlewheel boat at moonrise.

The best way to light these scenes was always a major consideration, and the weather did not always cooperate. Hoffman recalls one particularly overcast day when he was photographing a 90-year-old Creole cook preparing jambalaya with a recipe handed down from his plantation era grandmother. "My assistant Yuki Matsumoto and I lit the kitchen of this tumbledown shack with three dp heads and ¼ CTO gels to pro-

vide the appearance of sunlight streaming through the windows. A typical Southern storm was raging outside, but the sequence looks as if it was filmed on the most beautiful day you could imagine."

Manipulating the elements is one thing – if the weather is uncooperative a good director of photography can be relied upon to set things right – but there are other unexpected problems that are not so easily remedied. The series started with aerials of a riverboat

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race from New Orleans to St. Louis. When Hoffman and his crew flew down from New York, they discovered their film had been sent to Puerto Rico. It was ten o'clock at night, and the helicopter and mounts were booked for six o'clock the following morning. The boats were already 100 miles up the river in Natchez and the whole sequence was in jeopardy – if they waited for a shipment of film the race would be long over by the time it arrived.

Hoffman knew there must be some film stock in New Orleans, but all the film houses were closed and he had to do some quick problem solving. "I called the police and asked for the home number of whoever owned the largest film house in the city," says Hoffman. "Luckily this wasn't New York, and they were sympathetic. I got the number and woke the owner up at one in the morning to explain our situation. He dug out five rolls of film stock from his refrigerator and had his son deliver them to our hotel at three a.m." As a result the sequence was saved, a beautiful panoramic chase up the Mississippi, shot by a tired but triumphant Hoffman hanging from the helicopter.

Shooting an alligator hunt by moonlight required additional considerations. In order to give the appearance of the Cajun hunters' kerosene lamps, Hoffman rigged up a battery powered system he had heard about. "I went to an auto parts store and bought 12 volt motorcycle batteries which I wired to lights used for cars' license plates. I hid the batteries under the alligator hunters' coats, and ran the wires up their sleeves to the kerosene lamp housings in their hats." The result is a subtly shaded dramatic scene which looks as if it is lit by kerosene lamps and moonlight, yet has the intensity to illuminate the excitement of the hunt without dispelling any of the mystical enchantment of the Bayou.

To capture the excitement of Cajun festivals – often featuring unique entertainment – Hoffman relied on other techniques. One example came during a race of rare

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Chinese pigs, in which he had to run ahead of them, overcranking and shooting at 72 frames per second. The hilarious footage, underscored by music, shows the pigs with their ears flapping in perfect rhythm to the beat.

Another sequence is of frogs, and a Louisiana man who captures them by hand in his pond. He then sells them to local high school girls who knit elaborate costumes for them, and compete them in a beauty pageant of sorts. The festivities culminate in a frog race, as the audience of several hundred Cajuns cheer them on. "These things are taken very seriously," Hoffman says, "and it's not easy to shoot with your tongue in cheek — it tends to throw you off balance."

The series was slated to wrap in June of 1988, and will air in Germany, Austria and Switzerland in October.

At the time of this writing, negotiations were in progress to bring the series, (filmed in English with German voiceovers added in post production) to American viewers. Because of the strength of the German currency, and the Germans' incredible appetite for Americana, Hoffman is optimistic about more German-American co-productions, including two additional series (on folk music and jazz) which are planned upon completion of *The Sunbelt Saga*. △

The author is a freelance writer in New York whose contributions are regularly seen in Backstage, TV Guide and The New York Times.

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EDITING—PROJECTORS

Night Train to Kathmandu

by Karen Bean

A mystical kingdom; a handsome prince masquerading as a servant; a young girl far from home; a chase through the towering Himalayas: *Night Train to Kathmandu*, a Golden Tiger Pictures production, has all the components of a fairy tale, but director of photography Glenn Kershaw and director Bob Wiener had a different, more challenging, vision.

"We wanted to keep the experience as real as possible in a fantasy like this," Kershaw explains. "We're asking people to believe this boy comes from a land that exists only in books and myth. I wanted them to believe in these children; to believe this is a realistic journey that could happen to anybody."

The story follows Lily McLeod (played by Milla), the daughter of an American couple in Kathmandu. She meets Johar (played by Eddie Castrodad), a prince from a mythical Himalayan city, who is being tested by the temptations of our world. An innocent love story follows, spiced by an evil professor, Harry Hadley Smythe (played by Pernell Roberts); a chase through the Himalayas; and a deadly limit on the prince's time in our world.

Night Train, which premiered on Disney Channel in June with further distribution scheduled via Paramount Pictures, was shot principally in Nepal, with locations split between Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Tengboche, below Mount Everest.

"The reason we chose Nepal was, having shot films all over the world, we knew we would gain that third-world-textured look. A texture from the dust and smoke in the air, that's so heavy I chose not to use camera diffusion," Kershaw explains. "Nepal's also got an odd combination of early morning fog and a lot of high contrast."



Photo by Marshall Wiener

The high contrast that attracted Kershaw also posed problems of light control. "When you have hundreds of people in a crowded market place, and you've got to get kids to walk down an alley without everybody staring at the camera, you can't fly a 20-by or a griff out there," Kershaw says. "Quite often, you've got to keep the camera as far back as possible, choose your values from a distance, and place your negative accordingly."

Which negative became a question early in preproduction. Kershaw had shot Kodak and Fuji stock for previous features and documentaries, but was still concerned about Nepal's exceptionally high contrast. He ran tests that simulated the Nepalese day exteriors, and talked with DuArt's Don Donigi about what he saw as the "Nepalese problem". "We've worked with DuArt for a long time," Kershaw explains. "When you're half way around the world you've got to

have a real relationship with your lab; our work prints looked like answer prints." Donigi suggested that Kershaw take a look at Agfa's XT320 stock. After tests, Kershaw decided XT320 would deliver the look he wanted for *Night Train*.

"The color rendition was excellent, whether it was the pinks in the little girl's room, the confusion of colors in the market places, or the night exteriors where we were down so incredibly low that I used to gently tap my meter saying: 'I'm sure there's a foot candle there somewhere,'" Kershaw smiles. "The meter is really secondary; it's a tool. When the light looks right to the eye, it looks good on film." Kershaw's tests led him away from exposing the stock at Agfa's recommended 200 ASA for exteriors and 320 ASA for interiors. Instead, he chose 160 ASA for exteriors and 250 for interiors.

"The one thing about Agfa, is that it needs contrast," Kershaw warns. "Three to one to me is

Left to right: Director of photography Glenn Kershaw, director Bob Wiener, first assistant cameraman James Eaton, and actress Milla, shooting in Kathmandu's Kaiser Library.

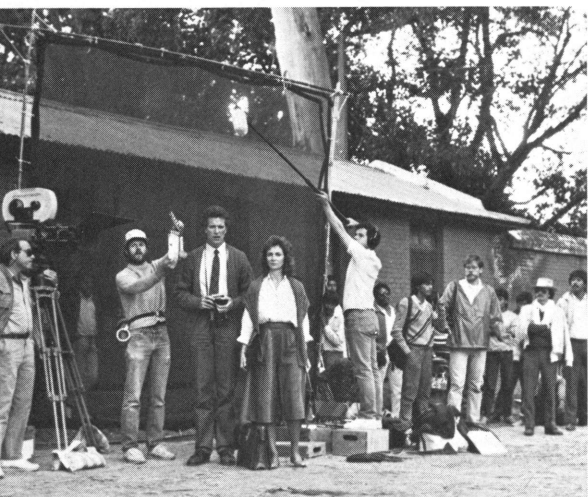


Photo by Gerry Polinsky

Day exterior with 12x12 net on bamboo frame.

too close; it's almost like flat lighting."

Kershaw has never gone into a film with a predetermined lighting ratio, preferring to base his lighting on realism. Each scene is determined by the natural light and by the on set practicals. When Lily and her parents first hear the story of the mythical city, the scene is a low key, night interior with a blazing fire, and a variety of exposure ratios. Two professors seated at angles to the fire are exposed at a 5:1 ratio. Lily, who faces the fire, is lit at 3:1. Lily's parents seated away from the fire are keyed by a lamp at 4:1, with no fire effect. As one professor paces the floor, he passes through five different exposure ratios. "That's just reality," Kershaw explains. "Every room has a variety of values, you just have to place your negative."

The desire for realism and the use of practical sources led Kershaw to a close working relationship with production designer Bill Bonecutter. "He was wonderful," Kershaw says. "We talked about Lily's color scheme, and what we wanted for each location. He pretty much turned Nepal on its ear, but he found what we needed. Nepal's not like Los Angeles where you can go to a prop house, You've got to dig."

Camera equipment was one area where there were no problems. "I've always liked the Panavision system," Kershaw explains. "So I went to Panavision and told Tracy Langen my restrictions, pro-

duction problems, and what I needed. He worked out the perfect package, and kept me within my budget." The package may have been perfect, but the dust and grit that helped give Kershaw his desired look could easily have turned the fantasy into a nightmare for camera assistant James Eaton. "He was so meticulous and dedicated we never had a problem, even in the mountains when our equipment was stored in tents at a Buddhist monastery surrounded by yaks," Kershaw smiles.

The camera package was complete, but electrical gear on *Night Train* offered its own set of challenges. Only eight par lamps and a soft light made the trip from Los Angeles; the remaining electrical units were trucked in from India. Due to power availability in Nepal (60 amps, 220 volts), the largest usable unit brought in was a senior. "We adapted to the equipment's limitations by scheduling all our day scenes around where I knew the sun was going to be and hope that we'd catch it," Kershaw says. "Lily's walk through the Kaiser Library is like that: we made sure to get there in the morning at the time the sun would come through the windows because we didn't have the arcs put in place of it."

Lighting decisions for night scenes were often made in response to the Nepalese power supply which can shut down unexpectedly. An ancient Buddhist temple south of Kathmandu seemed a perfect location for a scene of a dying priest passing on the mystical city's secret, until Kershaw arrived to find that power there had been cut the day before. "We stacked up candles; Bill had them all over the room anyway. One guy has a rim on the right of about 6 foot candles which are from candles clustered out of frame; and the old priest's entire light is six candles out of frame," Kershaw explains. When power was restored, a 750 soft light was added for the wide shot, with a candle added in the foreground to justify that source.

Just as the electrical package suffered, so did the grip pack-

age. Butterfly sets from 6-by-6 to 20-by-20's were part of the equipment brought from Los Angeles, but not the frames which were built out of bamboo. "Gerry Polinsky (key grip) had tremendous heart; he had to," says Kershaw. "It's like: 'Give me a 12-by here. Now.' He'd say: 'Sure, just a second,' and get out his twine and tie together some bamboo and rig it. It was constant problems. He had to throw out 30 or 40 feet of track in markets where there were people stepping all over us."

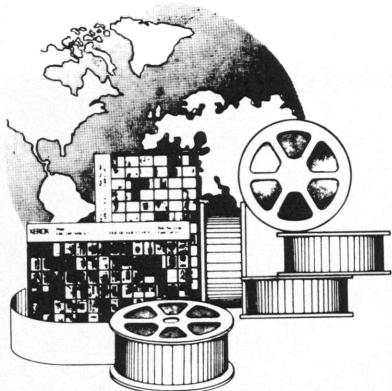
The only available "dolly" in Nepal was a potential disability which Kershaw and Wiemer turned to an advantage. The trolley, as it is called, is simply a metal doorway dolly. "Bob and I decided the limitations of the trolley wouldn't affect our shots. We wanted to tell the story in a simple, straightforward way, so we didn't need a boom arm at all," Kershaw explains. "We would track on a diagonal or straight across, or push in on the dolly. We found lines that would draw your eye into the frame and blocking that would allow the actor to rise into the frame."

One instance of this style can be seen when Prince Johar chases a mysterious shadow through the ancient streets of Backtapour at night. The camera remains stationary as Johar dashes out of a low tunnel and up a flight of cobblestone steps. He stops in a medium shot looking frantically about; then, realizing he can no longer see the shadow, his now slow footsteps carry him into a close-up.

Kershaw and Wiemer continually chose to see *Night Train's* problems as creative challenges. "We found motion and images that made a strong picture," Kershaw says. "If someone gave you one lens, you would say you can't make a movie with one lens. But you'd go out with that lens and shoot the most amazing film you've probably ever shot. Having a challenge really forces you to think." △

The author, Karen Bean, was a gaffer for the show, Night Train to Kathmandu.

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Cotton Mather
driving SteadiCam
operator Guy Bee.



Photos by Dwight Ueda

Motorbike Cameras a Smooth Ride

by Kevin Cody

The scene called for *Hearts of Fire*'s rock star hopeful, played by Fiona Flanigan, to hop on a Harley Davidson belonging to her enamored mentor, played by Bob Dylan, and chase down a country road after a blue Corvette driven by the hopeful rock star's heart throb, played by Rupert Everett.

Second unit director T. J. Scott knew how he wanted it shot, but not how it could be done, which is what gave stuntman and former motorcycle racer Cotton Mather the opportunity to prove an idea he had been hounding Scott about for months. "Instead of shooting pass-bys I wanted to get the audience right in between Fiona and Rupert as their stunt doubles raced down the road," said Scott as he recalled preparing for the scene shot in the fall of 1986 outside Toronto.

Scott's cameraman was Ludek Bogner, a Czechoslovakian emigré whose experiences included filming the Tour de

France bicycle race sitting backwards on a motorcycle.

Bogner was also looking to do something special with the scene, in appreciation of *Hearts of Fire* director Richard Marquand. Tragically, *Hearts of Fire* was to be the last film for the director of *Return of the Jedi*, *Eye of the Needle*, *Jagged Edge*, and dozens of other respected works. He died of a stroke last year.

"Marquand and editor Sean Barton wanted some spectacular sequences of the motorcycle chasing the Corvette. So I wanted to shoot everything at real speed. I didn't want to undercount at 21 or 22 frames a second. I wanted to shoot everything at 24. So we were going to have to go real fast, up to 160 kilometers per hour. I planned to use a 25mm lens so you'd see the cornfields and fence posts flipping by in the background. I couldn't shoot tight anyway because we were using stunt drivers to

double for the actors," said Bogner.

A five-ton camera truck would never go 100 miles an hour and even if Scott prevailed on Bogner to "cheat" with the camera, a truck would be too wide for Ontario's rural roads.

Recalling the solution to shooting the scene at high speeds, Scott said, "I started as a stunt performer and a local stuntman, Cotton Mather, had taken me out in his side car on a few occasions. He had put the idea past me quite a few times of shooting from the side car, and I was impressed with his driving, so I called on him for the chase sequence," Scott recalled.

Mather's bike was a 145 horsepower Yamaha V-Max with a modified racing sidecar. At the time the V-Max was the world's fastest production bike. Prior to becoming a stuntman Mather had spent nine years as a "privateer," racing with and without factory sponsorship in road races,

ice races and on dirt tracks. Along the way he had picked up several Canadian class championships in sidecar ice racing.

The first day of filming the chase sequence went better than Scott or Bogner had even hoped. Mather recalls Ludek constantly urging him to "go faster, faster," noting that most novice side car passengers are not enthusiastic about going fast. Ludek's confidence in his driver faltered only once, but was quickly restored.

"The motorcycle was supposed to pass the Corvette on a narrow bridge. And to make the pass look even more reckless, there was a parked car on the bridge," Bogner said.

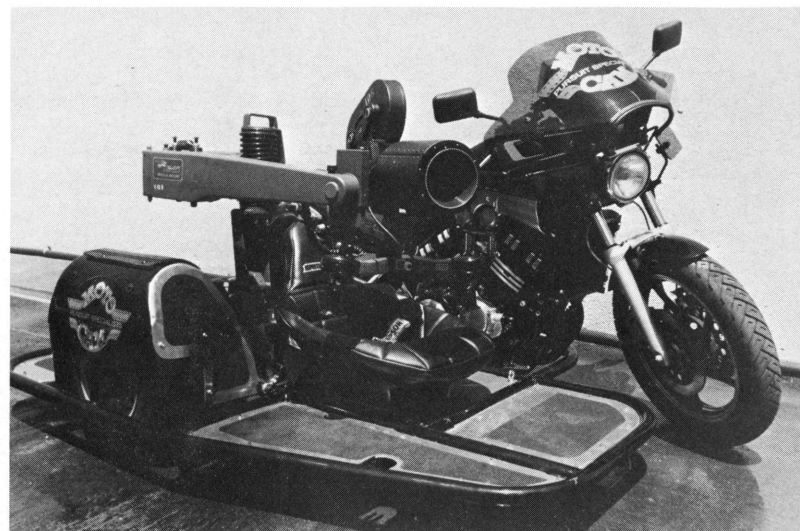
"We were going 100 kilometers an hour and when I saw the parked car I closed my eyes. I knew there was no way we could avoid hitting it and still let the motorcycle and the car pass us. But somehow Cotton threaded us through," Bogner said. Marquand was so impressed with the first day's rushes of the chase scene when he viewed them that evening that he sent Bogner a personal note of thanks and told Scott the second unit was on its own for the rest of the week.

The only problem Bogner recalled was controlling his hand held Arri III. He was belted in, but on high speed curves the centrifugal force threatened to rip the camera out of his grip. As a temporary solution he and Mather lashed the camera to the motorcycle with bungi cords. But the solution wasn't sufficient to avert what almost became a tragic accident.

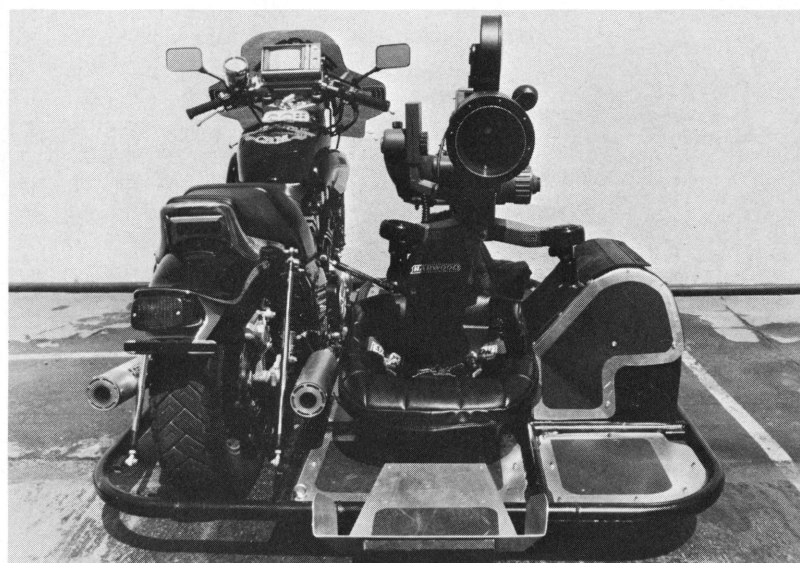
Bogner was filming the Corvette as it sped into a barely banked curve. The motorcycle was to wipe across the frame from behind and overtake the car as the two vehicles accelerated out of the turn. Bogner was using a snorkel lens that allowed him to hold the camera even closer to the ground than was allowed by his low seat, so the audience would fully appreciate the dangerous speed over the frost damaged road.

Just as the pursuing motorcycle entered the frame, Ludek felt the camera begin to get away from him and jammed his left foot against the bike to brace himself. At the same moment the motorcycle's rear wheel seized and the motorcycle and sidecar began to hop sideways into the path of the other motorcycle.

"Having the rear wheel lock going around a curve is the worst thing that can happen to a bike with a sidecar," said Mather, "it makes the bike want to 'go through the hole,' catapulting the driver and



Tyler Middlemount in forward shooting position. Below: In rear shooting position.



crushing the side car passenger."

Thinking the engine had seized, Mather pulled in the clutch but the wheel remained locked. With no power to the rear wheel with which to accelerate out of the slide, Mather began gently applying the front brake.

The crew stationed at the outside of the curve dove into a hedge for cover. Bogner has no recollection of the ensuing moments, except that they seemed to last a long time. In fact, almost as quickly as the problem developed, the bike and sidecar slowed and began drifting toward a ditch at the bottom of the curve, where it came to rest, upright.

In subsequent modifications of what has become a completely custom camera platform for his motorcycle, one of the first things Mather built was a foot bar for the cameraman to brace himself against.

Aside from the fact that it is still bolted to the side of his motorcycle, Mather's current camera platform bears little resemblance to the sidecar used in filming *Hearts of Fire*. There were two basic problems, said Mather, whose MotoCam unit has since been used to film car chases for V.H. Adderly, foot chases for *TNT* and even a bicycle race for Canadian Broadcasting Company.

The first problem was counteracting centrifugal pull on the camera when the MotoCam went into a high speed turn. This was solved relatively easily, with the assistance of Panavision Canada, by building an adapter for the Tyler helicopter mount. The mount, which features a counterweight to counterbalance gravity and centrifugal force, was developed to enable cameramen to shoot out of helicopters safely and vibration free. The Tyler mount also solved the

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problem of operator fatigue, which becomes a factor after hours of hand holding a 35 pound camera package.

A similar adapter was built for the Continental Helicopter mount with the assistance of the Van Nuys based company. With the aid of Cinema Products and MovieCam of Los Angeles, a post for the platform was also added to take a Steadi-Cam. All of the mounts allow for leading and following shooting.

A more challenging problem was how to design the camera platform so the operator could film from both sides of the motorcycle. Mather built an elevated swivel seat for the platform that enables the cameraman to shoot over the motorcycle.

Because the third wheel needs to be toward the rear of the motorcycle, it wasn't possible simply to design a double ended platform that could be bolted onto either side. The solution, Mather came to realize, was to design the platform so it could be quickly unbolted, flopped over and rebolted on the opposite side of the bike.

With assistance from the Toronto motorcycle shop of his former racing buddy Paul Eggleton, Mather built a steel tubing and aluminum floored platform with fittings for the seats, the camera mounts, the seatbelts, and the suspension that mirror one another on the top and bottom.

For the third wheel Mather built a double wishbone suspension, similar to that used in Formula I race cars. The wishbone suspension also provided for better isolation from road vibrations and better high speed handling because the toe-in, caster and camber could be adjusted for speed and operator weight.

Having resolved the two fundamental problems that had previously prevented motorcycles from being widely used in filmmaking, Mather went to work on refinements. For added rigidity, he designed the mandrel bent tubing that holds the camera platform to the motorcycle so that it wraps around the bike rather than attaching to just one side.

To help isolate the cameraman's funny-car race seat from vibrations, he cushioned them with rubber biscuits. Three-inch, quick release race car seat belts protect the cameraman from accidental ejection. There is room for two seats on the platform so a director or focus puller can accompany the cameraman and the seats can be arranged in a dozen different combinations.

The cameraman, if he wishes to maximize the sensation of speed, can even

film from a prone position. Or he can stand on the platform and use the extended seatbelts as a harness. The driver stays in contact with the cameraman via two-way helmet radios.

So that the driver of the motorcycle can see rear action without having to turn around, Mather has mounted a video monitor above the handlebars that takes a feed from the camera's video assist, or a direct feed from a video camera. If neither is available, a separate, rear facing video camera is used.

For situations in which even the camera platform proves too unwieldy - for example in a chase through narrow passageways - Mather designed an auxiliary frame that bolts to the back of his motorcycle, allowing the cameraman to shoot from the back seat with his feet safely up out of the way of the exhaust pipe and rear wheel - and brake pedal. After *Hearts of Fire* Scott called on MotoCam to film a chase scene for Nelvana Productions' *TNT* in which a small boy attempts to escape by foot from a pursuing automobile by running across a waterfront dock crowded with shipping crates.

"Even though we were only going as fast as a little kid can run, we couldn't use a camera truck because it wouldn't fit between the crates. We wanted to stay on the kid because we wanted to get his expression and show how he was able to squeeze through where the pursuing car couldn't," recalled Scott.

The only problem Mather has found with his unit has been filming in inclement weather. During another *TNT* episode in Toronto, Mather said, the MotoCam ended up with road salt seizing its brake calipers and he ended up with two frost-bitten fingers.

The MotoCam will be the subject of an episode on the cable program *Moto World* and Mather hopes that California cameramen will also find a use for it. "Sometimes cameramen are a little leery. But after one ride around the block, I can't get them out. Then the wardrobe girls want a ride. And pretty soon the whole crew has to have a ride before we can start working," said Mather. △

The author is a reporter for Easy Reader, a South Bay weekly newspaper. (For more information about MotoCam, please call (213) 462-2301.)

by Mike Maginot

Oliver Twist
Produced by Ronald Neame.
Directed by David Lean.
Photographed by Guy Green.
(Paramount Home Video)
Great Expectations
Produced by Ronald Neame.
Directed by David Lean.
Photographed by Guy Green.
(Paramount Home Video)

Great adaptations is the best way to describe these two films based on the works of Charles Dickens. The screenplays adequately condense the best elements of Dickens' novels into just less than two hours viewing time.

Britain's best, including John Mills, Alec Guinness, Frank L. Sullivan, Marita Hunt, Robert Newton, Kay Walsh, and John Howard Davies give unforgettable performances indelibly etched in black and white.

Guy Green's work on *Great Expectations* won him an Oscar in 1947. Oswald Morris, Green's operator on *Oliver Twist*, later became director of photography on the musical *Oliver* and reinterpreted the images from the 1948 *Oliver Twist* in color and wide screen.

...

Walker
Produced by Lorenzo O'Brien.
Directed by Alex Cox.
Photographed by David Bridges.
(MCA Home Video)

Past and present collide in screenwriter Rudy Wurlitzer's vision of America's involvement in Nicaragua. William Walker (Ed Harris), an American who became the president of Nicaragua in 1856, is portrayed as a megalomaniac soldier of fortune.

Peter Boyle, Richard Masur, Rene Auberjonois, and Marlee Matlin co-star in this cockeyed cousin to *Dr. Strangelove* and *Duck Soup*. Contradiction, irony and black humor abound as the accouterments of today infiltrate the past.

The epic qualities of the film are not lost on video, thanks to the frequent use

of extreme close-ups. Bloody battlefields and golden toned interiors abound. Bridge's well planned shots are edited in freewheeling style, but the care beneath the chaos shines through.

...

Betty Boop: Volumes 1 and 2
Produced by Max Fleischer.
Directed by Dave Fleischer.
(Hollywood Select)

Fleischer fans take note: These two volumes of "The Booper" contain ten cartoons each, all in beautiful black and white.

The Fleischer 3-D process, which utilized a turntable with miniature sets that rotated behind the framed animation cels, can be viewed briefly in many of these cartoons. Betty Boop, most often voiced by Mae Questel, who was also Olive Oyl in the *Popeye* cartoons, is at her animated best in these originals from the 1930's.

...

Adventures in Babysitting
Produced by Debra Hill and Lynda Obst.
Directed by Chris Columbus.
Photographed by Ric Waite, ASC.
(Touchstone Home Video)

A toe-tapping R and B score featuring Albert Collins and Southside Johnny provides a back beat to David Simkins very funny script about a babysitter's worst nightmare come true.

Elisabeth Shue plays the babysitter, with Maia Brewton, Keith Coogan, and Anthony Rapp as her charges. Calvin Levels cameos as a car thief with a soft spot for the kids and their caretaker.

Ric Waite's diffused cinematography and choice of colors tends to flatten the image, giving the film the look of a comic strip come to life. Practicals glow in the background of many scenes with warm or cool halos, depending on the mood of the scene.

Michael Lloyd's mattes add a thrill to the film's climactic moment.



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From The Clubhouse

The season's last dinner meeting in June was devoted to discussion of video transfers of film and the cinematographer's input. Allen Daviau, ASC, and Lou Levinson of Modern Video Film, were speakers on this subject.

In his discussion, Daviau emphasized the positive possibilities of the ever-changing electronic media, and pointed out some of the pitfalls and potential benefits of the cinematographer-video transfer supervisor relationship. Daviau explained his preference for transfer from the interpositive as opposed to direct transfer from the negative. He screened clips from *Empire of the Sun* in both timed work print and transferred video form to illustrate his theories. Daviau stressed the need for cinematographers to understand and participate in the transfer process for optimum video reproduction for the expanding home video and television markets.

Toward that end, Levinson presided over an animated question and answer session, which centered on the subject of cinematographers' control in the transfer room. Levinson, with Daviau, oversaw the transfer of *Empire of the Sun*. Conclusions of the discussion emphasized that communication of artistic goals and an understanding of the possibilities and shortcomings of the process are essential to successful film-to-tape transfer.

The remainder of the summer is being devoted to active-members-only rap sessions. Regular monthly dinner sessions for the entire membership will resume in October, according to Harry Wolf, president.

The 1988 ASC Golf Classic, played in June at Camarillo Springs, produced a number of champions among mem-



bers and their guests. Gene Polito's name was added to the perpetual Governor's Trophy as first place winner. Owen Roizman and Dick Glouner shared the honors for low gross, with Roizman in second place and Michael Margulies in third.

Prizes and trophies were awarded at a dinner June 20 at the clubhouse with Howard Anderson and Alric Edens, co-chairmen of the event, presiding.

Howard LaZare, associate member, and editorial vice president of SMPTE, has announced the program committee and topic chairmen for the 130 Technical Conference in New York, October 14-19. △

Gene Polito, at left, holds his winner's trophy. Leonard South presides over the festivities with Governor's Trophy shown at right.

35mm Freefall in Austria

Mattis Creation is the only professional parachute photography company in Austria. The firm's chief, Matthias Wölfl, recently celebrated his professional tenth anniversary in a spectacular way: he organized a tandem parachute jump from 27,000 feet and filmed the free fall on 35mm.

During the 14 month preparation period, a 35mm camera was custom built for the project by the Vienna-based firm Racine/Werner Raczkövi. Due to the free fall time, which was less than two minutes, the camera had to be loaded with a 400 foot cassette. Furthermore, the entire system had to be resistant to the -40° temperature at exit from the aircraft, in addition to the wind chill factor at a calculated maximum speed of about 233 mph.

A polyester and carbon fiber shell was mounted on a German "Krauter MR.1" full visor helmet, and the 35mm camera, along with two miniature camera motors, were mounted on the shell. This camera consists of an Arriflex case without a viewfinder and a handle in an upside-down position. The claw motor is attached to the top, and is poled to run backwards.

A guiding chain, which was originally designed for rotor control, is connected to the magazine mouth, located below. Therein, the film runs double-tracked to the 400 foot cassette. The cassette is carried, along with the attached winding motor, on the left side of the operator's body, under the arm and above the accumulator belt. This balances the oxygen tank (mounted on the right side) and reduces the helmet weight to 35.3 pounds.

To keep things light, the lens chosen was a 15mm Tokina Super wide



angle, set at fixed f.8 and focus 3m. Kodak's new 5297 stock was used and yielded superior results.

A breathing mask was fitted into the helmet which controlled breath oscillation with a valve system. Humid, exhaled breath is channeled through tubes behind the cameras to keep the lenses and helmet visor from freezing up. Wölfl, who was the cameraman, underwent intensive strength

training under sports medical supervision for six months prior to the jump.

The record jump was made on September 12, 1987 over the Wiener Neustadt West airport in Lower Austria. A maximum speed of 226.8 mph was reached after 28 seconds; after 116 seconds, at 2,600 feet, the parachute opened and ended the freefall. According to official information, the world records set with this jump were: the highest tandem parachute jump, and the highest freefall parachute jump with a 35mm movie camera.

As to the engineering, the following resume was drawn: 1) The accumulator belt on the body is sufficiently heat protected, although it is not carried beneath the suit. It is preferred to the helmet-mounted variant for reasons of weight.

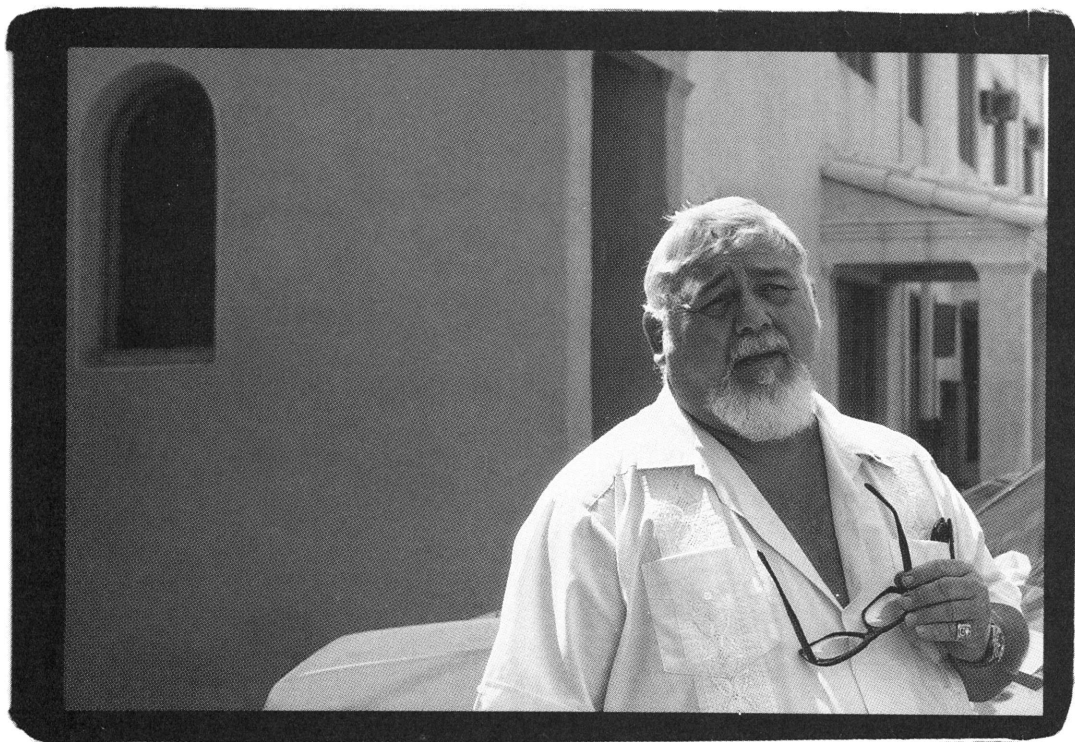
2) The 400 foot cassette offered such strong resistance in freefall that the cameraman had to use 60% of his maneuvers to stay in a subject-fixed position. Regarding the cassette, the technique is innovatively changed, so that the film runs from a supply cassette on one side, through the camera, to a collecting cassette on the other side.

3) The Arriflex case met all the requirements. Despite single-claw, it has been used at shootings for Austrian television with an image frequency of 60fps. Further, an Arriflex case with double-claw is being prepared for use with image frequencies of 150fps.

An amusing detail in the margin: When the positive copy was delivered to the sports department of the Austrian TV Center in Vienna, the first comment was an incredulous "They actually succeeded!"

—D.H.

Gerald Perry Finnerman^{ASC}



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on film:

"I'm not a purist, but everyone has to make a stand someplace. You work long, hard hours. The job is stressful. If you are going to put yourself through that, you might as well be doing something you can be proud of. Sometimes I get credit for techniques, like split-diffusion and sliding-diffusion, that other cameramen invented 40 or 50 years ago. I've also borrowed ideas from Rembrandt and Van Gogh. I light "Moonlighting" like a classic black-and-white movie. I take the light all the way around until it scares most people, and that's what makes it look so special. I only use crosslighting and prime lenses. That's how you get dimension. Today's Eastman films are subtle and elegant. You can blend them to get the look you want in different situations. If you know what you are doing, you can be daring. And that's what makes this an art form."

Gerald Perry Finnerman, ASC, has six Emmy nominations for "Star Trek," "Kojak," "The Gangster Chronicles," "From Here to Eternity," "Ziegfeld," and "Moonlighting." He won for "Ziegfeld."

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